

# LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

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{ From Beginning,  
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## SEPTEMBER.

AN April burst of beauty,  
And a May like the Mays of old,  
And a glow of summer gladness  
While June her long days told ;

And a hush of golden silence  
All through the bright July,  
Without one peal of thunder  
Or a storm-wreath in the sky ;

And a fiery reign of August,  
Till the moon was on the wane,  
And then short clouded evenings  
And a long and chilling rain.

I thought the summer was over,  
And the whole year's glory spent,  
And that nothing but fog and drizzle  
Could be for Autumn meant :

Nothing but dead leaves falling  
Wet on the damp, dark mould,  
Less and less of the sunshine,  
More and more of the cold.

But oh ! the golden day-time ;  
And oh ! the silver nights ;  
And the scarlet touch on the fir-trunks  
Of the calm grand sunset lights !

And the morning's bright revealings,  
Lifting the pearly mist,  
Like a bridal veil, from the valley  
That the sun hath claimed and kissed ;

And oh ! the noontide shadows,  
Longer and longer now  
On the river margin resting,  
Like the tress on a thoughtful brow.

Rich fruitage bends the branches  
With amber, and rose, and gold,  
O'er the purple and crimson asters,  
And geraniums gay and bold.

The day is warm and glowing,  
But the night is cool and sweet ;  
And we fear no smiting arrows  
Of fierce and fatal heat.

The leaves are only dropping  
Like flakes of a sunset cloud ;  
And the robin's song is clearer  
Than Spring's own minstrel crowd.

A soft new robe of greenness  
Decks every sunny mead ;  
And we own that bright September  
Is beautiful indeed.

Is thy life-summer passing ?  
Think not thy joys are o'er !  
Thou hast not seen what Autumn  
For thee may have in store.

Calmer than breezy April,  
Cooler than August blaze,  
The fairest time of all may be  
September's golden days.

Press on, though Summer waneth,  
And falter not, nor fear,  
For God can make the Autumn  
The glory of the year.

Sunday Magazine.

## OCTOBER.

CHILD of the grand old Autumn,  
October floateth by,  
A regal grace on her sun-kissed face,  
And light in her beaming eye ;  
Over her polished shoulders  
To the dull and fading grass,  
The golden brown of her hair flows down,  
As her springing footsteps pass.

She will breathe on the dim old forest ;  
And stainings of crimson light,  
Like the blushes that speak  
On her own bright cheek,  
Will fall on the leaves to-night ;  
And the mellow sight of the dawning,  
When the first faint sunbeams play,  
And the flushes that rest  
On the sunset's breast,  
She will leave on the trees to-day.

She will tap at the cottage window,  
One tap with her fingers cold,  
And the fire will be bright  
On the hearth to-night,  
As it was in the nights of old ;  
And hearts will draw close together,  
In the lights of the cheery flame,  
While fond lips will bless  
For their happiness  
The sound of October's name.

Then she'll touch the tree-tops softly,  
And a carpet all fresh and sweet,  
In colors as bright  
As the rainbow's light  
Will fall at her fairy feet ;  
Sometimes she woos the summer  
By the light of her magic smile,  
Sometimes she calls  
At the past king's halls,  
And bids him reign awhile.

Then when the hills are woven  
With many a tinted strand,  
When a veil of romance  
(Like the bright clouds' dance)  
Is wrapped over sea and land,  
Like a dream that is wild with splendor,  
Like the sun at the close of day,  
Like the visions that rest  
In a maiden's breast,  
October will float away !

ANON.

From The Cornhill Magazine.

## THE FRENCH PRESS.

## SECOND PERIOD.

## REIGNS OF LOUIS XIV. AND LOUIS XV.

## I.

IN treating of the French Press \* during the first period of its existence, which ended with the death of Cardinal Mazarin, we showed that Parisian newspapers enjoyed full liberty during the Fronde, but abused that liberty and fell passively under police-rule again as soon as the civil war was over. These alternates of license and subjugation have marked the history of the French Press ever since ; and we can follow no gradual development into freedom and dignity, no growing sense of the responsibilities of journalism, and no permanent decrease in the hostility of Government towards newspapers, as is the case in the Press chronicles of some other countries. The history of French journalism is indeed summed up in the adventures of divers individual journalists, some of whom have been writers of conspicuous talent and honesty, and some others, men whose brilliant, often heroic, crusades against abuses resembled the achievements of knight-errantry. But the efforts of these few have always been nullified by the ignorance and scurrilous effrontery of the many. French journalism has never been a disciplined force, but always a guerilla horde ; and for every steady marksman that stood out, there have been from the first, a hundred senseless freebooters, who fired their shots anyhow, and were a hindrance as well as a disgrace to the causes they pretended to serve. This is so now, precisely as it was two hundred years ago ; and the average French journalist of to-day is neither better taught, nor more reasonable, nor less conceited than his brother of Louis XIV.'s reign. He has even degenerated, considering the increased opportunities he has for instruction : and the early conductors of the *Gazette de France*, *Mercur*, *Journal des Savants*, and *Journal de Paris* were better

acquainted with the politics and literature of foreign countries, besides being incomparably finer classicists and writers of their own language, than nine-tenths of the Parisian journalists of our own time. This fact should be borne in mind, and also this other : that the material conditions of French journalism as a medium for imparting news, have altered very little in the course of two centuries, notwithstanding telegraphs and railways. Take a copy of the *Evening Post* of Charles II.'s reign, and a comparison of it with *The Times* of the present day will prove what a giant stride has been made by the Press in England ; but a comparison between a modern French paper and an old one suggests just the contrary impression, and one is surprised to see what little progress has been effected in the amount and variety of the news supplied, and, above all, in the veracity of this news. The primitive French gazettes made the most of the resources at their disposal, and were really very fairly informed. They published summaries of foreign intelligence gathered from despatch bags, scraps of home news cooked up so as to be amusing, and personalities against rival gazetteers. No doubt a good deal of their news was false, but they had, at least, this excuse, that trustworthy items were difficult to procure and not always safe to print when found. As much cannot be said for the French papers of our day, which, having plentiful, and even exhaustless, supplies of news always at hand, decline to make use of them. Your ordinary Parisian editor prints a few foreign telegrams, without a word of comment, and, as it is costly to keep a staff of reporters employed in collecting genuine intelligence on home subjects, he finds it simpler to fill his columns with inventions or vague rumours, garnished with spurious embellishments. Nobody puts any faith in the parliamentary anecdotes, startling scientific discoveries, murders, diplomatic intrigues, and horrible catastrophes, which abound in Parisian newspapers. For the most part, such news appear without any specification of date, place, or authority ; and the names of the persons concerned in them

\* LIVING AGE, No. 1520.

are replaced by the convenient formula "Monsieur X.," or at most by initials. Occasionally names of places are given — when, say, an imaginary fire has been described — but immediately some other papers print letters from inhabitants in the locality denying the statement with indignation; whereupon the journal taxed with falsehood retorts magnificently that to be caught in a lie now and then is an evidence of enterprise, seeing that it is only timid news-sheets which confine themselves to well-authenticated facts. As to foreign nations, French journalists — disdaining to learn any tongue but their own, or to admit that the whole universe is not centered in Paris — are as benighted as ever they were, and England and Germany might be at the antipodes for all they know or care of their doings. In speaking of the *Journal des Débats*, it is fair to cite at least one journal which during seventy years has maintained a character for truth, accurate knowledge, and able writing; but repressive laws, by rendering journalistic property insecure, have prevented this exception among French papers from ever growing in power as an organ of world-wide information. It is a candid vehicle of political and literary criticism, but not a newspaper, and it cannot compete in point of enterprise with the most insignificant of London — to say nothing of American — journals.

However, if the national press, such as it is, weighs so heavily on the official mind in France, one may judge how it operated on Louis XIV. This King was gracious to the rhymster, Loret, because Loret was a prudent man, who never let his pen say all he thought; but there were other newsmen less cautious, and though no pains were spared to hunt these out of their clandestine printing-shops, the edicts as to unlicensed publications were repeatedly infringed until, in 1665, three years after Mazarin's death, the King took sharp measures, which showed he was not to be trifled with. That year an unlucky man with one eye, and who professed himself unable to read, was caught at the very door of the *Gazette de France* office selling pirated copies of

that paper. The piracy was eminently ingenious. The front page offered the exact reprint of the current number of the *Gazette*, but in the other columns were interspersed violent lampoons against some ladies of the Court, amongst others, the Duchess of Bouillon, whose husband in furious wrath sent four of his footmen with sticks to drag Isaac Renaudot, the editor, into the street and give him a thrashing. Isaac protested, his clerks took part for him, and there ensued a pitched battle, in the midst of which the *Exempts* (policemen) of the Châtelet arrived, and laid hands on the man with one eye — by name Collet — who had profited by the disturbance to sell his counterfeits at a premium. Isaac Renaudot easily proved that he was not responsible for the lampoons, so Collet was removed to prison, and the next day, by the King's special orders, subjected to torture to make him reveal his accomplices. Under pressure of hot irons applied to his arms and the calves of his legs, Collet roared that he had been employed by one Joseph Lebrun in the Rue de l'Arbre Sec, and by-and-by this Lebrun being also questioned with hot irons, swore that the author of the lampoons was a nobleman, who had been supplying him with defamatory squibs in prose and verse, and also with capital to print the same, for the past two years. The name of this nobleman was never made public, for the King decided to hush up the matter; but Collet and Lebrun were flogged at the cart's tail and sent to the galleys, after which a census of all the printing-presses in Paris was taken, and it was reported that there were 123 of them; that is, 103 more than were licensed. All these superfluous presses were at once confiscated, and the owners of them fined and imprisoned; a raid was further made on the manuscript newsmen, who continued to haunt the Tuileries, and one of these persecuted beings, Louis de Roderay, has left a burlesque poem, describing how he slipped out of the hands of the *Exempts*, and was cheived as far as the Rue des Juifs, the public charitably tripping up the *Exempts* as they ran, in order to give Roderay every chance. However, the



matter had ceased to be a joke. Louis XIV. contemplated nothing less than constituting the traffic in news-letters, manuscript or otherwise, into a Government monopoly to be managed by the Lieutenant-General of Police. He was stimulated to this course by the Jesuits, who were beginning to be all-powerful at that time, and who of course would have taken care that the letters were edited conformably with their views. But the scheme — which was only the prototype of the wholesale official journalism which Napoleon I. and Napoleon III. since tried to establish — fell through for want of a definite plan and a master-hand to experiment it, and the news-letters soon revived as before, until finally superseded by printed papers. As to the presses, it is not likely that the census included all those which really existed in Paris, for the wooden hand-presses of that time were easy to hide; besides which many noblemen had private presses, and the police had no right to pry into noble mansions. But Louis XIV.'s severity inspired a wholesome terror to the entire tribe of newsfolk, and if unlicensed gazettes cropped up now and again, vendors of them were extremely wary about plying their trade, and contrived to linger about the precincts of the Temple and the Abbaye, which, being sanctuaries, afforded them a harbour of refuge in case of pursuit. It is to be noted, too, that the clandestine papers of Louis XIV.'s time, though often flagrantly subversive, were almost always issued under the patronage of some courtier-nobleman, who wished to wreak his spite on a brother courtier; but these gentlemen shielded themselves very craftily behind subordinates, so that their offences could never be clearly brought home to them, and they chivalrously allowed their hirelings to bear the full responsibility of the anonymous lampoons — the said responsibility consisting chiefly of stripes.

Louis XIV., however, had no wish to hinder journalism as a purely literary institution. He objected to the flying sheets which poked fun at Court appointments, dealt maliciously with the private

lives of his favourite great ladies and of his racy young bishops, and he detested the news-letters, because their reports of Versailles' doings were more graphic than complimentary, and served to inoculate the provincial nobility with a poor opinion of royal morals. But he loved jokes at small people just as he loved pastry; and epigrams against his enemies, good verses and smart criticisms on dull books, were as agreeable to him as the champagne which was his usual drink. Therefore, when leave was asked him to found a journal which should deal with literary events as the *Gazette de France* did with political, and afterwards another journal which should be the organ of social topics, lively but loyal and discreet, he readily consented, and thus were established the *Journal des Savants* and the *Mercur*, which remained household words in Frenchmen's mouths until the Revolution.

## II.

The *Journal des Savants* was founded by Denis Sallo, Councillor of the Parliament, and it flourishes to this day. M. Sallo was a man of deep learning, great industry, and exquisite manners; and, in addition to this, he possessed the critical faculty to a rare extent, being able to judge a book in a few terse lines as impartial as they were shrewd. Colbert took him under his protection as Richelieu had done with Théophraste Renaudot; and he seems to have been anxious that the *Journal des Savants* should be a more valuable work altogether than the *Gazette de France*, for the French Ambassadors abroad received orders to send M. Sallo complete lists of the books that appeared in foreign countries, and also copies of the books themselves when it was worth the while. *Journal des Savants*, though, was an unlucky title, for it was associated in people's minds with abstruse Latin treatises, and it needed nothing less than M. Sallo's exceptional literary merit both as writer and editor to surmount the prejudice which this suspicion of pedantry suggested. The first number appeared on January 5th, 1665, and was published every Monday without interruption till

March 30th, when M. Sallo was dismissed from his editorship by a Jesuit intrigue. The paper was of quarto size, having twelve pages of two columns each, and cost one sou. It attracted little attention at first, and it is on record that a crier venturing into one of the markets with fifty copies under his arm was apostrophized by a fruit-woman, who told him he had much better sell her the whole lot there and then as waste paper, for he would infallibly have to get rid of them in that way by-and-by. But when the authors of Paris discovered that they were going to be handled once a week by a man of strong mind, who was determined to speak fearlessly, it was another matter, and the *Journal des Savants* was gratified at once with a large circulation, and an inveterate pack of enemies. Criticism was almost a novelty then. There was a fine collection of writers — especially dramatic writers — who had never been told that their works were bad, and had no wish to be told it. Some of these were in the pay of noblemen, and as strictures on the books or comedies which they dedicated to their patrons, reflected in a manner on these patrons themselves for countenancing such effusions, Sallo began to receive hints from Dukes and Marquises that he had better leave this and that author alone. The better class of writers, too, were not slow in taking offence, for it is an unfortunate fact that from the day when a man first put his thoughts upon paper, down to our present intellectual age, authors have resented any questioning of their talent with a curious bitterness. Sallo's criticisms were courteous and temperate, but this made no difference. He was charged with animus, envy, imbecility, and bad taste. When he praised one author all the others shouted that he was venal; and if he left any one unnoticed the thing was attributed to an ignoble desire that the scribbler in question should remain ignored. Modern critics, who are initiated by long usage to the sort of treatment which was a new experience to Sallo, may sympathize with the bewilderment in which he sought to explain that his intentions were pure. He was laughed to scorn, and one afternoon as he was coming out of his office with one of his sub-editors, the Abbé Gallois, that ecclesiastic had his head punched and was anointed with a bottle of ink. Three unappreciated authors had selected this mode of vindicating their genius, only they mistook l'Abbé Gallois

for M. Sallo. From that day M. Sallo remarked philosophically that it was no use arguing with men who answered you with ink-bottles, and he continued his criticisms without condescending to justify their sincerity. Nevertheless, his enemies were too powerful for him. In the first place, he stung the author Ménage, and as a specimen of seventeenth century criticism we may as well quote the review which secured him the implacable resentment of that eminent author. M. Ménage had just published his *Aménités Juris Civilis*, and Denis Sallo thus wrote of it: —

This book is divided into forty chapters; but it is enough to read the first and the last, for as much will be learned of the scope of the work by these means as by perusing the whole. In the first chapter there is an investigation as to whether the word *dialectician* used in Law 88, *ad legem Falcidiam*, refers to the Stoics or the Megarians; in the second, we find an inquiry as to whether *responsitare de jure* is the same thing as *respondere de jure*. One of the three last chapters treats us to an exhaustive dispute as to the meaning of the word *graculus*, which has been rendered diversely as jay and crow; but the author, after examining all the proofs, concludes for crow; and it may be hoped that learned men will henceforth cease to debate on a point which, to be sure, had not largely engrossed public attention. In the last chapter but one are collected all the etymologies scattered about in the works of juriconsults; and the final chapter of all investigates the unsettled question as to whether the sort of men who guard the seraglios of Eastern princes are in a condition to carry arms. The contents of the other chapters are as interesting and erudite as the above; whence one may infer that the book is of too scholarly an order to be studied by any save men of rare attainments.

M. Ménage could not digest this notice, and he speedily found an ally in Charles Patin, brother to Dr. Guy Patin who had made Dr. Renaudot's life so burdensome. Guy Patin may be taken as the embodiment of conventional respectability in seventeenth century France. He differed little from the same type of man in our own day, for he disliked innovation and truth; would admit of no common sense in any head but his own; and was for putting down clever people as adventurers. It was quite in the nature of things that such a man should have a respectable brother, who wrote a book called *Introduction à Philosophie par les médailles*, and Sallo would have done better to leave the respectable book and brother alone, as facts too

weighty to be interfered with. But he criticised the brother, and the brother retorted by a pamphlet. Guy Patin and other respectable people raised the hue-and-cry against this interloper who had come and set himself up as a sovereign judge of better men's works, and Colbert, irritated at such insults against a writer whom he knew to be the soul of honesty, threatened Charles Patin with the Bastille. Thereupon Guy Patin, writing to a friend, broke out after his wont in Latin —

*Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas,*

and he bestirred himself so actively in organizing a league of social ostracism against Sallo, that the unfortunate man had already two-thirds of Paris arrayed against him, when, at the beginning of March — that is, when his paper was just two months old — he ventured to meddle in ecclesiastical business, and put himself in his enemies' power. The Papal Index had condemned the famous work by Marca, *De Concordantiâ Sacerdotii et Imperii*, and also a treatise by Launay, which assailed the abusive privileges of religious orders. Sallo, who was a staunch Gallican as well as an expert jurist, took the defence of these incriminated works, both on theological and legal grounds; and he thus ended the article — "The censorship of the Inquisitors cannot detract anything from the esteem which will be awarded to the books of M. Marca and Launay by all good Frenchmen, for these works contain only sound maxims, such as are the basis of civil liberty in all free states." This was quite enough for the Jesuits, who had been watching with alarm the independent spirit of the *Journal des Savants*, and had actively seconded Guy Patin's cabal, hoping, doubtless, that they might get the management of the paper into their own hands. They set the Papal Nuncio to work, and this dignitary requested that the journal might be suppressed. Louis XIV. refused five times, but the sixth he reluctantly gave his consent, for the influences brought to bear on him were too many and importunate for further resistance. So Denis Sallo lost his place, and it was a heavy blow to him, for he had begun to take pride in his paper. It does the King credit that he should have endeavoured to protect the journalist, and it is a pity that Colbert should not have possessed in this instance the same ascendancy over him as Richelieu did over Louis

XIII., for if the *Journal des Savants* could have lasted ten years instead of three months only, under Sallo's direction, it might have propagated ideas which were not disseminated till sixty years afterwards, when the Encyclopædists revived them, but in a dangerous form. This, however, has always been the way in France. A reformer arises, intent upon doing good work by peaceable means, but, being an innovator, is at once silenced. In course of time, when his ideas have been sullenly fermenting in the public mind, without being able to find a vent, some noisy fanatics start up, let loose all the vent-peggs at once, and sweep resistance off its legs by a flood, in which there is as much rubbish as sense — a flood which ravages instead of fertilizing. It is the old story of the stream whose course is checked by a bar, behind which refuse of all sorts accumulates along with the water. One day the bar bursts, and in the place of a pure rivulet, irrigating slowly but surely as it flows, you have a troubled torrent, racing madly over the country and reducing it to a swamp. The stream is progress by enlightenment; the bar, official stupidity; and the torrent is revolution — of which the French must have seen enough by this time to understand the simile. When Sallo was removed, all the usefulness of his paper went with him. His successor was l'Abbé Gallois, the same who had the ink-bottle poured over him: but the *Journal des Savants* now applied itself to conciliating literary cliques, and apportioning praise or blame according as authors were powerful or fractious or the reverse. It became, in fact, the organ of literary respectability, and its altered character soon appeared in this, that it grew popular with men of letters, an infallible sign that its opinions were no longer worth having.

It was not till the middle of the eighteenth century that the *Journal des Savants* recovered a part of its early prestige, but by that time its place as an outspoken organ of criticism had been usurped by the *Mercure*. This amusing paper, the forerunner of the modern *Figaro*, was started in 1672 by Donneau de Visé, who was a literary Bohemian, neither honest nor learned, but very bold and clever. He was born in 1640, and had been trained for the Church, but, feeling no taste for that profession, had fled from home and set up as a publisher's hack, writing anything that would bring him money. By dint of perseverance

and also by frightening a manager \* almost out of his senses, he got a comedy accepted at one of the theatres, and this first venture being successful, he wrote other comedies, became easy in his circumstances, and acquired the sort of tinsel reputation which soon or late rewards all pushing people. Louis XIV. had been rather annoyed at the breaking down of Sallo's scheme for the *Journal des Savants*, and he was piqued at hearing that the English papers were so much more numerous and lively than those of his own kingdom. He said one day that he saw no reason why France should yield to England on such a point as gazette-writing, and was seriously displeased when some too frank courtier remarked that successful journalism was impossible without a certain degree of freedom, and that of this commodity Frenchmen possessed none. About this time Donneau de Visé, who had no influence at Court, addressed a petition to the King, sketching an attractive prospectus for a paper half political, half literary. The Jesuits approved the plan and advised Louis to borrow it without letting its author reap the benefit: that is, they undertook to found the paper themselves if a full privilege were conceded to a creature of theirs, one Marvaux, a pamphleteer. The King made no objection to Marvaux's having a trial, but he refused to appropriate Visé's idea altogether, and Marvaux and Visé launched their papers simultaneously, with this difference in the result, that Marvaux's *Journal des Nouvelles* ran six weeks, whilst Visé's *Mercur* lasted 137 years, and forms a collection of 1,812 volumes. The paper met from the first with a wild sort of success, greater than that which had hailed the first number of

Renaudot's *Gazette de France*, for it was much more suited to Parisian tastes. Visé was an unscrupulous editor, who picked the choicest morsels from the best poems, comedies, novels, and pamphlets current, and inserted them without quoting the authors' names. By these means he made up a medley that was most readable, besides being quite new; and every Parisian who could spell pounced upon the precious sheet as monkeys will on nuts. On the morning of the day when the second number appeared, a great crowd of noblemen's servants clustered outside the publishing office, waiting to get early copies, but presently arrived a number of water-carriers, beggars, and costermongers, who contended that the public had a right to be served first, seeing that the noblemen would have the copies delivered at their own houses in plenty of time for their needs, few of them getting up before twelve, and the footmen's eagerness being nothing but a stratagem to secure copies which they themselves might read before their masters were out of bed. Arguments of a personal nature never lasted long in those days, so in less than ten minutes the rival parties had proceeded to a scrimmage, in the midst of which the office-door was imprudently opened, the combatants rushed in, and the whole edition of 2,000 copies was cleared off in the twinkling of an eye, the office being gutted of its furniture into the bargain. When the mischief had been done, the watch and the police, of course, hastened to the scene, and with customary acumen arrested Visé himself, whom they caught firing a horse pistol full of swan-shot after his plunderers. When the King heard of the matter, the same afternoon, he sent the despoiled editor too Louis, and the Prince of Condé did as much; only, for the next few months, Visé presided in person over the opening of his office on publishing days, and sat behind the table with his horse pistol in one hand and a drawn sword lying close to the other. This led to the bad pun which a wag chalked on his door: "Visé vise aux mal avisés visant à lire les *Mercur* ravis. Eh! Vice eh! Avisé sois!" (Visé aims at the ill-advised who seek to read the stolen *Mercuries*. Eh! vice, eh! take warning!) Another tribulation soon beset him in the shape of criers who came and bought up his first editions and sold them to the public at a fancy price, whence complaints without end, which Visé checked at last by appealing

\* He and two other threadbare playwrights disguised themselves as police agents, and arrested the manager in his bed at midnight. They blindfolded him, took him to their lodgings, and once there told him that he had incurred the resentment of a prince of the blood by rejecting a comedy which H. R. H. had submitted to him anonymously, and that their orders were to cut off his ears after reading him the piece which he had so ignorantly despised. The manager confessed piteously that he seldom read the pieces sent him, because he had no time; but he went into ecstasies over the beauties of the work as declaimed by his captors, and tried to prolong the reading of it by every means in order that the cropping ceremony might be postponed as much as possible. When he had been fairly scared out of his manhood and had agreed to perform the play without delay, provided only his ears were spared, the three jokers made him sign a statement to the effect that he accepted the piece of his own free choice and out of enthusiastic admiration for its brilliancy. Then they avowed the hoax, and the manager was wagg enough himself to forgive them in consideration of their originality.

to the Lieutenant of Police to arrest and whip all such as should be found retailing his paper for more than twelve sous the single copy or three livres the bound volume of four numbers which was published at the end of each month.

To understand the success of the *Mercurie Galant* it must be remembered that books were then costly, few, and dry, and that on the other hand the number of people who could read was very large. The Jesuits had done a great deal for education in Paris (though little in the provinces), and public amusements being few, tradespeople whose instruction had been neglected in early life studied of an evening when their shops were closed. It was a great boon to get hold of a newspaper, but especially of one which, being published by royal privilege, could entail no troublesome consequences on those who bought it, and a journal which extracted all the tit-bits from the literature of the day and set itself to record passing events in a chatty, comical style, was naturally a most welcome improvement on such a grave organ as the *Gazette de France*. The publishers of Paris, whose profits were seriously diminished by the cool larcenies which Visé made from their works, raised a great outcry, but could obtain no redress. The paper was too interesting to be in any way snubbed. Ladies who could not read Latin treatises were delighted to get the pith of them served up in French, with humorous comments; and courtiers who had not time to ferret out the smart passages from long-winded poems, asked for nothing better than to find these passages reprinted for them in the *Mercurie*. Add to this that Visé was a biting critic of the sort whose very disingenuousness makes them popular. He attacked Molière, and pretended that l'Abbé Cotin (covered with undying ridicule by Boileau) was a much greater man. He declared that Perrault far excelled Virgil, Homer, and Horace; and that Racine, who gave a shout of dismay at this heresy, was a simpleton. Boileau himself was not spared, nor Regnard, Balzac, J. B. Rousseau, or La Bruyère. Every man of undoubted merit was assailed by de Visé, and such is the prestige of impudence that writers who had rebelled furiously against the mild and gentlemanlike criticisms of Sallo in the *Journal des Savants*, cowed tamely under the lash of the barefaced, unprincipled lampooner. Here are a few specimens of the journalistic amenities which Visé inaugurated:—

A poet who has ruined one publisher, and is fast hurrying a second towards the workhouse (l'hôpital), came yesterday and wrote "Pig" on our door. We thank him for his courtesy in thus dropping his card on us.

Monsieur J. B. R— (J. B. Rousseau?) complains that we are blind to his merits. We reply that nature has not endowed us with the faculty of seeing clear through muddy water. But we will resume this discussion when Monsieur R— has paid his tailor for that maroon coat which he has been sporting so proudly all this month, notwithstanding the two creases in the back, which form its most attractive features.

Monsieur A—! Monsieur A—! you have written a Latin treatise on the soul, and a schoolboy copied a paragraph and showed it to his master as his own. He has been whipped for writing nonsense and bad grammar.

We hear that M. M— (Molière?) is not happy at our remarks on his last comedy. We pronounced it tasteless: we were wrong. Being plagued with mice, we set a copy of this valuable work near a hole in our flooring; twelve mice came and ate of it and died in cruel agonies.

It is reported that Count d'A— and the Marquis de L. O— have had a duel about their honour. It is singular how some people will fight about nothing.

Some of these pleasantries might possibly have led M. Visé into scrapes had he not made it a rule to pay a compliment to the King in every one of his numbers; he also let the clergy alone, and spoke cautiously both of Court ladies and Jesuits. This ensured him a safe career, and he edited the *Mercurie* till his death, which did not occur till 1710, thirty-eight years after the paper was founded. During the first few years of this time he had Thomas Corneille, brother of the great Corneille, for his sub-editor, and he always showed a talent for gathering a good staff of writers round him, though singularly enough, he would never entrust his contributors with the task of conducting the journal whilst he was ill. Thus two attacks of ague he had in 1673 and 1675 caused him to suspend publication altogether for three months, and in 1676, falling ill again and being ordered a change of air, he suspended the *Mercurie* for two whole years. But from 1678 the paper appeared regularly, though as a monthly, not a weekly periodical, Visé having arrived at the conclusion that the weekly numbers were most interesting when bound up all four together than issued separately. In this form the paper became virtually a magazine, and swelled to 400 pages, but its attractiveness seems to have been rather enhanced



than diminished by the change; M<sup>de</sup>. de Montespan remarking flatteringly of it, that the only drawback to the old *Mercur* was that there was not enough of it, and that she, for her part, preferred drinking a bumperful of champagne once a month to sipping a thimbleful every week. M. Visé grew into a very consequential person towards the close of his life, and sported a velvet coat with gold lace. A nobleman having called upon him to beg an insertion in praise of a lady he was courting, Visé kept him waiting three-quarters of an hour, and when the nobleman mentioned the lady's name (she was a widow addicted to rouge) the editor said dryly, "Sit down and write the compliment yourself, my lord, for I am no judge of painting."

Visé was succeeded by one of his contributors, Rivière Dufresny, who was in all respects an oddity, but a journalist to his fingers' ends. He had been valet to Louis XIV. when young, and married his washerwoman when he was forty, to quash a debt of thirty pistoles which he owed her and was unable to pay. Somebody having observed in his hearing that poverty was no sin, he answered, "No, it's much worse;" and he was poor to his dying day—gambling away his money as fast as he earned it, and giving beggars crown pieces, instead of pence. After conducting the *Mercur* brilliantly for three years, he retired on a pension paid out of the proceeds of the paper, and remained one of the registered proprietors till his death, which Voltaire chronicled in the lines—

Et Dufresny, plus sage et moins dissipateur,  
Ne fut pas mort de faim, digne mort d'un auteur.

The two editors who came afterwards, Le Fèvre de Fontenay (1714-1716) and l'Abbé Buchet (1716-1721) were both distinguished scholars and critics, and Buchet, desirous of rendering the paper less frivolous, changed its name from *Mercur Galant* to *Nouveau Mercur*. He forgot, however, to be less sarcastic than his predecessors, and so was poisoned in 1724 at the age of forty-two, by some small but spiteful wits, whose vanity he had offended. The next editor seems to have been painfully impressed by this catastrophe, for he kept his name a secret, and it was not till 1724, when the *Mercur* was transformed anew into *Mercur de France*, that a gentleman named La Roque was found bold enough to risk arsenic by declaring himself respon-

sible for the contents of the journal. The *Mercur* had now become a fine property, and the editor drew as much as 20,000 livres from it. The Government learning this, and being imbued with peculiar notions as to literary proprietorship, issued a minute confiscating the revenues of the journal, and decreeing that the editor's salary should be fixed at 10,000 livres, the surplus to be devoted to pensions payable to former contributors. The editor assented to the arrangement, for he earned large perquisites by inserting puffs in favour of enriched farmers-general, who wished to be compared to Lucullus and Mæcenas, and actresses of more beauty than talent. This was beginning to be recognized as a legitimate branch of profits in a well-conducted newspaper, and a story is told of an actress who visited La Roque, laid ten louis on the table, and said: "Now, Sir, I hope you'll treat me to something fine for this money." "Unquestionably," said La Roque, and he wrote there and then:—"M<sup>lle</sup>. Serlet deserves to have her salary increased by at least ten louis." "What, is that all you're going to put?" asked the actress in astonishment. "You seem to think ten louis a large sum," answered the editor, quietly. M<sup>lle</sup>. Serlet took the hint, gave 100 louis, and was conscientiously puffed from that day forth. On another occasion an actress called with a diamond-backed watch, which La Roque much admired, and which she promised to send him when she returned home. She did so, and La Roque wrote in the next *Mercur*: "M<sup>lle</sup>. Normeilles is an actress full of promise; it is a pity that her memory should be so defective." Of course the lady returned to ask the meaning of this strange sentence, and to protest against it as a breach of contract. "Pardon me," replied La Roque, "you sent me the watch, but you forgot the chain."

It must not be inferred from this that the *Mercur* jobbed its columns throughout, but it has long been a maxim with French journalists, and indeed with others besides Frenchmen, that praise may be sold without harm, for it occasionally converts a poor performer, artist, actor, or writer, into a good one by force of encouragement. The *Mercur* did not require money to praise people who deserved it, neither, as a rule, did it sell its censure to gratify private malice. It simply did what Loret first began to do in his *Rhyming Gazette*, that is, extolled persons with more money than



brains, and left the public to ratify or dissent from the eulogies at its pleasure. There were some editors, however, who were entirely incorruptible. Laplace, Marmontel, and La Harpe, three men of honour, became successively conductors of the *Mercur*, and the paper attained, in their hands, to the highest character for impartiality. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, to be a contributor to the *Mercur* was reputed as great a distinction as to write for the *Revue des Deux Mondes* now-a-days; and all the writers of eminence in France figured on its staff, turn by turn, most of them writing anonymously. No one can peruse the *Mercur* of a century ago without feeling that its superiority to all the other periodicals since published in France is indisputable. Not even the *Revue des Deux Mondes* can compare with it in sustained interest and purity of style, and one may instance the review published shortly after the appearance of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* to show that criticism had reached its climax of perfection under Louis XV.'s reign, and has done nothing but degenerate ever since. The review in question, however, humorous, sparkling, and in every way admirable as it is, forms but one of hundreds of other essays, novelettes, and epigrams, which Parisian journalists of the present generation would do so well to study as models. The wit of the contributors \* appears to have been inexhaustible, and it is not the smallest proof of their pre-eminence over their descendants that they should have written so many good things without putting their signatures to them. Thus there are scores of Voltaire's articles scattered anonymously about the columns of the *Mercur*. Where is the modern French periodical that would be content to possess a contributor but half as illustrious without trumpeting the fact to the whole world from every advertisement boarding in the capital?

\* Chamfort, a dramatic critic, being seated one afternoon correcting a proof in the office of the *Mercur*, Garet, another critic, walked in and announced his coming marriage to a lady whose perfection of mind and person he enthusiastically described; Chamfort offered his congratulations by writing at the back of his proof these lines:—

A mon avis, le plus grand des trésors  
C'est une femme honnête: je m'explique.  
Je veux qu'elle ait l'esprit comme le corps,  
Que le devoir soit sa seule pratique;  
Qu'en son cœur soit toute sa rhétorique,  
Que sa raison ne conteste aucun point.  
Heureux qui l'a, cette merveille unique!  
Mais plus heureux encor qui ne l'a point!

## III.

THE publication of the *Mercur* was not interrupted till the Revolution, but long before that date its exclusive privilege as a social and political organ had been set at naught, and hundreds of newspapers and magazines appeared in imitation of it. However, it must be remembered that until Louis XVI. was de-throned, Paris was officially supposed to possess but three periodicals: the *Gazette de France* for politics, *Le Journal des Savants* for literature and science, and the *Mercur de France* for politics, literature, and social matters mingled.

For a time these monopolies were respected, but only for a very short time, Louis XIV. promised Donneau de Visé that any infringement of his rights should be punished with the galleys, but it was difficult to punish with the galleys Frenchmen who went to London, Holland, Flanders, or Geneva, and founded papers there, nor was it easy to seize the numerous copies of these prints which were smuggled into Paris. Moreover, it was not quite fair that Paris should be deprived of its news-sheet because M. Visé happened to have the ague, so the King was obliged to compound. The *Mercur* retained its nominal privilege, but semi-political journals were allowed to appear by paying it a tax, which varied from 1,000 livres to 5,000 livres a year, and also an equivalent tax to the *Gazette de France*. To keep up the fiction of the monopoly, the tributary papers bore the name of some provincial town and purported to be both printed and published there; for it was apparently better, according to official notions, that a journal should tell a periodical falsehood than that the immortal principles of routine should be disturbed. In course of time some laxity occurred in these arrangements; the tributaries grew remiss in their payments, and then ceased to pay at all. During the Regency of the Duke of Orleans (1715-23), the *Gazette de France*, *Mercur*, and *Journal des Savants* combined to bring an action for infringement against all the papers then existing, but they were non-suited on a technical objection; and this was their last attempt at asserting their prerogative. They remained content with the prestige which their connection with Government secured them, and with a fee of 1,000 livres, which new papers paid them at starting, in return for a bond of indemnity guaranteeing the new papers against suits at

law. The *Journal des Savants* was the worst off of the three by this *concordat*, for it could only claim a fee from purely literary journals, and the prosecution of these was so troublesome and useless a matter that towards the beginning of the eighteenth century Government abandoned the task, and tacitly allowed any Frenchman who pleased to start a paper provided there was no mention in it of politics or religion. This liberty, though, was of a very fitful kind and subject altogether to the whims of the Lieutenant-General of Police and the clerks acting under him. Papers would swarm one day and be confiscated wholesale the next without a shadow of reason. It was a continual cycle of sunshine and storm.

As may be supposed, a king so autocratic as Louis XIV. did not relent in his severity towards the Press from any growing love of journalism; he yielded because the Press was simply too strong for him. The papers which were published abroad and found their way into France were most dangerous nuisances. They undermined the royal authority by lauding the institutions of free states like England and Holland, and they turned the King personally into ridicule, by painting him exactly as he was in mind, body, and speech. Louis XIV. has come down to us like many another sovereign, with the halo of grandeur which Court panegyrists and historians have set like a second crown on head. But kings are not, as a rule, famous for great intellect, or even for common sense or taste; and Louis XIV. was, as Thackeray has so well dubbed him, a Royal Snob. Eaten up by his own conceit, talking an inflated jargon of bumptiousness, pompous in little things, peevish, dissolute, ugly and hypocritical, he was just the king to afford humorists an endless subject for jokes; and his successor, Louis XV., was like him, with the additional royal virtue of being stingy. The *Gazette d'Amsterdam* and the *Gazette de Leyde*, two papers which are better known under the generic title of the *Gazette de Hollande*\*, took minute note of all the foibles and stupid utterances of this kingly pair. They had correspondents at Court who could never be detected (the Duke de Saint Simon was always suspected of being one of them; hence Louis XIV.'s strong dislike to him; the Duc de

Lauzun was suspected too), and they led a mocking chorus, which was kept up by a multitude of other gazettes, some of which were virulent beyond conception. Here is a complete list of the foreign papers printed in French, which made sport of the Majesties of Louis XIV. and XV., and soured their royal minds:—

*Nouvelles Ordinaires de Londres*, 1650–54; *Gazette de Bruxelles*, 1654–1711; *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, 1663–1791; *Mercur Hollandais*, 1672–84; *Gazette de Leyde*, 1680–1798; *Mercur Historique de La Haye*, 1686–1728; *Lettres d'Amsterdam*, 1680–90; *Lettres de La Haye*, 1692–1928; *Journal de l'Europe* (Strasbourg), 1696; *Esprit des Cours de l'Europe* (Portsmouth and Brussels), 1699–1710; *Nouvelles des Cours d'Europe* (London), 1710–15; *La Quintessence des Nouvelles* (Amsterdam), 1712–27; *Mémoires Critiques*, 1722; *Le Nouvelliste sans fard* (Cologne and Cleves), 1723–25; *Courrier d'Avignon*, 1733–88; *Gazette d'Utrecht*, 1734–87; *Nouveau Mercure de la Haye*, 1740–54; *Magazin des Evénements* (Amsterdam), 1741; *Epilogueur Politique* (Amsterdam), 1741–42; *Démotithènes Moderne* (Amsterdam), 1746–47; *Le Moissonneur* (Utrecht), 1741–42; *Journal Universel de la Haye*, 1743–47; *Nouvelliste Suisse* (Neuchâtel), 1754–68; *L'Observateur Hollandais* (La Haye), 1755; *L'Année Politique*, 1758; *Courrier du Bas-Rhin*, 1682 (this paper, published at Strasburg, exists still); *Gazette des Pays Bas*, 1760–65; *Gazette des Gazettes* (Bouillon), 1760–89; *L'Observateur Français à Londres*, 1769–72; *Gazette des Deux Ponts* (Zweibrücken), 1770; *Lettres Historiques de Cologne*, 1788–98.

That these papers were not foes to be despised may be seen from the long time which many of them lasted; and several volumes might be written about the stratagems employed for introducing them into France, and the diverse methods adopted by the Crown to combat them. They entered France in herring-tubs, in bottles presumed to contain Rhine wine, in bales of cloth, oyster-barrels, boots, coat-linings, and even in the muzzles of cannon returning from war. Coming back to France to winter after a campaign in Flanders, Marshal Vauban ordered a battery to halt and fire a salute to the French flag within sight of the frontier. Of the six pieces that were drawn up for this purpose five were found rammed to the mouth with copies of the *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, which a captain of artillery had put there "to

\* There was never a paper called the *Gazette de Hollande*. The name was applied collectively to all the French Gazettes printed on Dutch territory for circulation in France.

prevent the damp from getting into the guns," as he laughingly said. Vauban appears to have laughed too, though he ordered the gazettes to be torn up and distributed as wadding. The papers were, in fact, irrepressible. In vain was it that the King's ambassadors complained of them; in vain was it that Louis XIV. conquered Holland, actuated in his hatred for that country principally by the Gazettes it produced: in vain was it that the importation of all foreign journals was declared high treason. The papers filtered across the frontier no one could tell how. One day Louis XIV. marched into the Galère des Glaces at Versailles livid with rage and holding a newspaper clenched in his hand. The whole Court were assembled and quaked at the signs of fury which were unusual with the King, for he seldom went beyond waspishness. "Monsieur de la Reynie," he cried shrilly to the Lieutenant of Police, "this must be put a stop to. Any man, no matter what may be his rank, who is found with one of these papers in his possession, shall answer for it with his head." Half-an-hour later, drawing his handkerchief from his pocket, he pulled out a Dutch Gazette which some nimble-fingered courtier had dropped there, probably to show the absurdity of punishing people for what might be a mere accident. As to Louis XV. and his mistresses, M<sup>me</sup>. de Pompadour and M<sup>me</sup>. du Barry, they were continually discovering newspaper extracts thrust by unknown hands in places where they would be sure to find them. The Duc de Richelieu talking one day of the scurrilousness of foreign journalists, M<sup>me</sup>. du Barry answered spitefully, "I should like to see into your heart and find how many of those scurrilous papers you had brought with you to Versailles to put into my Japan vases." "Into my heart, Madame," answered the witty Duke; "you surely don't imagine your sex has left me heart enough to keep a record there of all the good things I do." On another occasion Louis XV. remarked: "I wish my best friends would save themselves the trouble of putting newspapers under my napkin to prove their love for me. I take their affection for granted without that."

Louis XIV. hit upon the idea of publishing papers in Paris which should bear the titles of *Gazette de Leyde*, *Gazette d'Amsterdam* &c., hoping thereby to confuse the public, who would buy the

loyal papers expecting to find treason there and be deceived for their pains. But the experiment was not of long duration—for the only people confused were the police agents, who could not be at the trouble of examining the newspaper in every reader's hand to see if it was a genuine sheet or a counterfeit. The result was, that everybody bought the disloyal gazettes and pretended, if caught, that the purchase had been made under the impression that it was the loyal print, as the words *cum privilegio* certified. As a last resource, the licensing of Parisian gazettes under provincial names or dating places, as above mentioned, was attempted, and this was fairly successful. The *République des Lettres*, *Bibliothèque Universelle*, *Journal de Médecine* (half political), and *Lettres Historiques*, are the most celebrated of the papers launched from 1682 to 1692; and in 1702-4 and 1705 appeared successively the *Journal de Trévoux*, *Journal de Verdun*, and *Journal Littéraire de Blois*, all three well written and highly popular.

The *Journal de Trévoux* was edited by Jesuits and lasted many years; the *Journal de Verdun* was conducted by a man named Claude Jordan, who passed for a most devoted subject; but who, whilst editing a loyal paper for the King, was secret editor of that very *Gazette de Leyde*, which he had been commissioned to counteract, as was found out after his death to the stupefaction of all well-thinking minds. The *Journal Littéraire de Blois* was in the hands of a doctor who had adopted the ingenious and most satisfactory theory that people who disregarded the Biblical precept about honouring the King invariably perished by a violent death, which nature provided for them if the hangman did not. He published horrible instances of this in the form of tales, relating how various factious persons had, within his own knowledge, fallen from house-tops, died of small-pox, or been bitten by mad dogs. It must have been entertaining literature for family reading when the curtains were drawn after dark; and the paper sold well.

It is unnecessary to speak of the rush of financial papers which occurred under the Regency, whilst Law's bubble Mississippi Company was turning Frenchmen's heads. Most of these, though they professed to appear regularly every day, were simple placards with sensational headings, such as—"Important list of *Beggars who have been enriched by M. Law's*

shares ; " " *Account of the sudden fortune of Marie Bontran, who was cook to M<sup>de</sup>. Begon, and has now a coach of her own, thanks to M. Law !* " They must have been, in many cases, advertisements launched by Law himself, for this enterprising Scotchman was considerably in advance of his age in matters of charlatanism. There is no doubt, however, that he planned to found a daily paper of as vast proportions as any we have now. The *Daily Courant* had been started in London in 1702, and Law, being grandiose in all his views, wished to set up a journal "five times as large" as the *Courant*, and on the joint-stock system, like his Company. Had he not been ruined, it is probable this scheme would have been carried into effect, and have met with success, for the Regent was Law's resolute backer, admired him, and would have followed him into any venture. As it was, a gazetteer, called Saint Gelais, tried to establish a daily paper in 1717, but two numbers of it only were published,\* and the French were destined to wait until 1777 before the *Journal de Paris* came and supplied a want which had long ceased to exist in most other European states. Previously to 1777 French newspapers appeared once or at most twice a week. The *Gazette de France* was the only paper that continued to publish supplements, amounting occasionally to six or seven within a fortnight; but these were in general like the supplements of the *London Gazette*, records of promotions and official acts, rather than reports of news. The impediment to daily papers in France was, that journalists could never be sure of their property for two days together; and it would have been folly to embark capital in a speculation which any court lady, favourite, or under-

strapping clerk could have snuffed out with a breath to gratify a minute's resentment.

## IV.

WE come now to that period of the eighteenth century when politics were at a standstill, and when the battles of the Philosophers with the Church absorbed all men's energies. It was the era of Voltaire, Diderot, d'Alembert, Rousseau, Grimm, the Encyclopædia and the expulsion of the Jesuits. Fury is a mild word to describe the animus exhibited by both parties in this desperate struggle. Writers were thrown into the Bastille every day, came out again and set to work afresh with more violence than ever. The King, his mistresses, his policy, and the perilous state of the national finances were all lost sight of. The great question was — "Ought Christianity to be maintained or not?" To which a quarter of Paris said "Yes," while the other three-quarters cried "No," and the point was fought over with pen and ink.

There were then two sorts of writers besides the Philosophers, namely, the Gazetteers and the Journalists. The former wrote for the papers licensed to talk of politics, the latter were attached to the literary prints, whose name was legion, and of course the two sets hated and despised each other cordially. The Gazetteer maintained that any scarecrow was fit for a Journalist, and the Journalist retorted that a man must have a grovelling soul to be a Gazetteer. The truth was, that the Gazetteers were the better men, being the richer, and the Journalists would mostly have been glad to become Gazetteers could they have obtained employment on the political papers. A similar feud raged during the first and second Empires between the Grands Journalistes and the Petits Journalistes, and the quarrel may be summed up as Fine Coat vs. Shabby Coat and *vice versa*. There were a few exceptional journalists, however, who steadily declined preferment to the higher prints, and gloried in expending a talent that was essentially French on flimsy little sheets, whose wit and popularity were far in excess of their volume and commercial value. In the battle of Philosophy the Gazetteers took part on one side or the other, with grave arguments and scholarly essays; the Journalists waged war with puns, songs, and ridicule. A few took no part whatever, but splashed the combatants on either side with their pens most impartially.

\* In 1676 François Colletet started a *Journal de la Ville de Paris*, and hoped to bring it out every day. He published one copy, and was thrown into prison by the *Mercur*'s editor for infringement. This one copy bears date 4th July, and relates how 1,000 persons were drowned in less than a week by bathing in the Seine during excessive heat. Some practical joker cut the rope which had been hung across the Seine for the convenience of people who could not swim. All who were holding on were carried away by the stream and drowned. This took place on the 29th June, and 300 corpses were picked out on the morrow. St. Gelais's venture in 1717 was also crushed by the *Mercur* and *Gazette de France* acting in concert. We learn from one of his two numbers that the first public masked ball at the Opera took place on the 2nd January, 1716, and these balls had become all the rage in 1717. The Théâtre Français took to giving one every week throughout the carnival, and the theatre was lit by sixty-four chandeliers with eighteen branches: total 1152 wax candles. The admission was 1 crown per man, but nothing for ladies, and the ball began at 10 P.M. and ended at 6 the next morning.

The journalists of the Encyclopædic era were queer souls, who lived in garrets and dined chiefly off fried potatoes, served in a paper by the stove-woman round the corner. Almost every big street had its journalist, and an own particular print, which this lean but indefatigable being published on candle paper once a week. The man was known down the thoroughfare. He chronicled the marriages, births, or connubial woes of his neighbours; he was welcome to a dinner now and then, and it was always remembered that he ate much. If he showed himself eloquent in praising the comeliness or good wares of the fruiteress downstairs, maybe he had a smile and a bag of apples given him for nothing; if he went on the opposite tack, he risked having a saucy kitchen water emptied over him next time he passed. In either case—apples or kitchen water diminished in no respect the amicable relations he kept up with the neighbourhood; and the grocers of the district called him an honest rogue good-humouredly. It was no great matter to him, if he were paid for the copies of his journal, which he personally hawked about, in cash or kind, and a pound of sausages for three copies, two rush-dips for a single number, or a pair of breeches for a whole half year's subscription, were remunerations he could not afford to despise. People confided to him their grievances, and besought him to libel their neighbours, which he did obligingly enough, if he had no special reason for refusing; and as a natural consequence, he had always a few grudges stalking after him, though these desisted in time, for the journalist had a soothing tongue. Some morning the whole street would be thrown into a state of commotion, and the inhabitants would troop out of their doors to see their domestic chronicler marched away solemnly between two tip-staffs and in a somewhat hang-dog mood, to the Bastille. Perhaps it was debt; perhaps a too bold shot at some one in place—clerk, beadle, recruiting-sergeant, or what not. Then there would be much cackling in the street and cries of compassion, and the rancour for past libel, if any survived, would melt away; and the apple-woman, the stove-woman, the tailor's wife, and the cobbler's niece would take turns at going to the prison and passing the poor journalist a few delicacies through the iron bars. But he was not an important bird enough to be caged for any length of time—he was a tomtit, not

an eagle—and it was never very long before the sun shone again upon him, as he was released from durance and cautioned not to come there again. Then he would find a bouquet on his garret sill when he returned home; and the neighbours would treat him to roast veal, and broach a cheap bottle of vin d'Argenteuil in his honour. Sadness had reigned whilst he was away, mirth and joy had attended the resumption of his duties as a censor of state polity and a purchaser of fried potatoes. The journalist was never rich, for money melted in his fingers, and he seldom married, because marriage is incompatible with the pursuit of literature and gallantry, which should go hand in hand. The customary end of the journalist was the hospital and a deal coffin, and the usual epitaph was: "C'était un bon diable!"

The Encyclopædists, Voltaire at the head of them, disliked the journalist, and called him *gueux*, *coquin*, and other energetic things, because the journalist set light store by fame to whatever eminence it attained, and would write of an Encyclopædist as of any other man. But it must not be forgotten that Voltaire hated and persecuted others besides the representatives of French Grub Street. He was not a liberal for all his philosophy, and people who picture him as turning at bay upon a whole pack of curs who snarled at his heels, have got hold of the wrong end of the story. So long as the Church was in the ascendant, the Encyclopædists no doubt had a hard time of it. Their works were burned by the hangman, they themselves peopled the Bastille in squads, and if they escaped the halter, it was owing to no fault of their enemies. But after the expulsion of the Jesuits, the tables were reversed, and there is nothing more curious than the alacrity of the lately persecuted philosophers to pay off old scores, and so prove that a man may be a great liberal in theory, and yet dearly love a little quiet oppression for his own private behoof. There were three writers of distinction and honour, l'Abbe Desfontaines, l'Abbé Grosier, and M. Fréron, who are classed in most men's minds, on the strength of Voltaire's description of them, as imbeciles of the choicest sort. They were virtually the three defenders of Christianity during the eighteenth century, the only men who endeavoured without anger or bad language to withstand the flood of impiety which had been let loose over the land in the name of free thought. Fré-



ron in particular was a most polite and just controversialist, but this did not prevent him from being treated as the blackest of scoundrels by the Encyclopædists, whose infallibility he had contested, and Voltaire did his honest best to ruin him. This, then, was the condition of the Press at the close of Louis XV.'s reign:—The Philosophers had triumphed, but the Press, taken as a body, and as regards freedom, moderation, and respectability generally, had not made a step forward since the time of Renaudot and Loret. There were brilliant writers, and honest writers, but the Encyclopædists, who might have done much for the liberty of Journalism by showing themselves generous after their victory, established the precedent that the uppermost party in France should always keep the lowermost under heel, and, above all, gag it. D'Alembert, one of the first apostles of the Rights of Man, actually petitioned Frederick the Great to suppress the *Courrier du Bas-Rhin*, which had criticised one of his, D'Alembert's, books too candidly; and the despotic King was compelled to remind this exponent of liberty that the first of Man's Rights is to have a free tongue. With the accession of Louis XVI. the French Press entered upon the third period of its history. Speculative philosophy was shelved, and Gazetteers and Journalists applied themselves to the work of preparing that great Revolution which sent most of them to the scaffold.

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ERRATUM.—A confusion of persons was inadvertently made in the Article on the French Press (*Coruhill Magazine*, June 1873, p. 725. The error was copied into THE LIVING AGE, No. 1529, p. 209.) It was with Anne de Bourbon, Duchess of Longueville, and not with Marie de Longueville, Duchess of Nemours, that the Duke de la Rochefoucauld fell in love. Mdle. de Longueville was step-daughter to Mdme. de Longueville. Also, page 724, line 11, LIVING AGE p. 209, for the words, "Retz's henchman Gondî," read "Retz's henchman and relative Ambroise de Gondî."

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From The Argosy.

NINA, THE WITCH.

BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

LATE one evening Thomas, now Maître Thomas Méchin, came home from a long visit which he had been paying his uncle of Blossville. As he stood on the kitchen

hearth unfastening his heavy cloak, he asked Jeanne for the news of Manneville. Jeanne pursed up her lips and looked firm. News! she knew of no news. She was not a gadder like Laure, thank heaven. Then, in the same breath she added: "The curé's servant is ill, and Benjamin, whose boy was bewitched, you know, broke his arm last week, and your cousin Seraphine was married on Thursday, in Fontaine, to a butcher, and they say that Nina, the witch, must be dead, for no one has seen her for the last ten days."

Thomas looked stunned. "Any one could see," said Jeanne to Laure, "how fond he had been of his cousin. For when I told him she was married he just stared and walked out of the house."

Yes, out into the darkness of the night went Thomas. A chill rain was falling, but he heeded it not. He crossed the bridge; he went through the gloomy Passée, and as the narrow plank that led over to the island was not in its usual place, he did not look for it, but waded through the river till he stood on the other shore. From this spot he should have seen the light in Nina's cottage; but he did not. No yawning grave could be darker than the island on this dark night. He raised his voice and called aloud:

"Nina!"

A startled bird rustled in a tree above his head, and some little frightened creature scampered away close by his side, then all was still again.

Thomas went on, stumbling in the darkness, straight to the cottage he went, seeming to find it by instinct as a bird finds its nest. It was black and silent, but the door was on the latch, and as Thomas opened it and went in, the smouldering ashes on the hearth told him that Nina was not dead after all. In a moment he had found an old iron candlestick, and lit the end of tallow candle in it, and even before he had put it down on the table, he had seen Nina.

Yes, there was Nina sitting on the chair opposite him, Nina with white lips and dark sunken eyes, Nina pale as death and looking like one who has been to Death's own door.

"Nina, you are ill," said Thomas.

"No," she answered with strange apathy.

"You are ill—did no one come nigh you?"

"No one," answered Nina.

Thomas set his teeth and clenched his fists in mute anger to think how hardened



were the hearts of her kind against this poor girl.

"And so they would have let you die alone," he muttered.

"Yes," replied Nina; "they would."

"Nina, I was away or that should not have been—but I am at home now and —"

"I want nothing," said Nina. "I worked to-day, but I am not strong yet and —"

She grew very white. Thomas quickly applied his brandy flask to her lips, and though she turned away from it with a shudder she was too weak to resist him; but even that fiery draught did not seem to bring back life to her chilled heart. She did not faint as he had feared she would, but she sat there before him like one half dead. Thomas thrust a whole faggot of wood on the hearth, till there shot up such a blaze as filled the room. He carried Nina, chair and all, to the warm glow; he chafed her icy hands till something like the warmth of life returned to them; he took off his heavy cloak and wrapped her in it, and Nina submitted to it all with the apathy of recent illness.

Sorrow and remorse filled the young man's heart as he saw her so helpless.

"Oh, Nina, forgive me," he said; "forgive me, Nina," and yielding to an impulse which might not be wise, but which was honest, he stooped and clasped her in an embrace full of repentant tenderness.

But never was attempted kiss so fatal as this. Before his lips could touch her cheek, Nina had sprung to her feet with a cry, and stood before him, herself once more. The strong spirit he had forced her to drink had given her new life. The light had come back to her eyes, the colour to her cheeks and the old hatred to her heart.

"How dare you?" she cried, "how dare you?"

"Nina," entreated Thomas, "let us be friends."

"Never!" she replied, clenching her small hands; "I hate you."

"Do you, Nina?" asked Thomas, in seeming wonder.

"You know I do, and if you do not hate me too, you are base."

"But why should I hate you, Nina?"

"Because so far as I could I have injured you," she answered, her passion rising with his calmness; "have you forgotten it?"

"You broke my French horn; well, I

have got another. You bit me once"—he smiled as he said it; "well, Nina, your little teeth drew blood, but even as they left no scar on my cheek, so all your wrong doing has done me no harm—none."

Her eyes flashed, her lips quivered. "Have you forgotten the treasure?" she asked in a low tone. "Well, then, I found it; I took it, and it was on your land. Yes, I found it beneath the three stones—the treasure of Père Jean, the treasure that could have made a rich man of you; I found it and I took it."

She stood before him with extended hand, in the dramatic though unconscious beauty of her southern blood. But though he eyed her with strange keenness, as if his glance would penetrate the very soul of this passionate young creature, it was coolly that Thomas replied:

"You found nine five-franc pieces, six of which you gave me for rent the next morning, Nina: nine and no more."

Nina raised her two hands to her forehead, and pushing back her hair, she looked at Thomas.

"Then it was you who put that money there," she gasped; "it was you."

Thomas nodded, without looking at her, and sat down on a chair.

"And so," said Nina, "when I met you there you had come to hide the money and not for the rent, and when I saw you there again in the morning, you had come to see if I had taken it: well there is something I did not mean to tell you; but I will, and taunt me with your alms after that, or dare to say that I have not injured you! Your father wrote to his sister to come. He wanted you to marry your cousin. Your aunt never came, and her daughter is another man's wife. Well, that was my doing."

This time Thomas started to his feet, his eyes sparkling with anger.

"It is not true," he cried, "you could not—you dared not."

"I dared not!" she laughed scornfully, "and I could not! As I was crossing the bridge, I saw you in your kitchen, giving the letter to Benjamin's boy, whom I had bewitched, you know, and I bewitched him again—for I stole the letter."

Thomas sat down again, and was long silent. When he spoke he was so calm that the triumphant light died out of Nina's eyes.

"You did a wicked thing," he said. "God forgive you, Nina, but you also did

me a great good," he added with a sigh of relief. "If my poor father had exacted it, I would have married my cousin; but my wedding-day would have been the darkest in my life—no, I cannot think of it," he exclaimed, with something like passion.

Nina looked bewildered.

"Then you did not like her?" said she.

"Like *her*!" he replied, looking her full in the face. "No, Nina, I did not like her; I liked another girl; but you are no witch, Nina; you are no witch, after all."

No, truly, Nina was no witch, for the revelation came to her like a thunder bolt falling at her feet. At first she seemed stunned, and it was not till Thomas plainly said, "And now, Nina, will you be my wife?" that she rallied.

"You cannot mean it. You say it to make a jest of me and have *your* revenge," she cried almost wildly. "How you would laugh if I were to believe you! But I do not; oh no, I do not."

"Try me, Nina."

She snatched up the light, and holding it aloft, she bent her dark eyes on his face; but Thomas only smiled. Then putting down the light, Nina went and fetched a broken ink-bottle, an old pen, and a scrap of paper, and she set them before him.

"Write it down," she said imperiously; "write that unless you marry me before a month is out, you will forfeit something—your house, your land—no matter what."

Thomas took the pen, and whilst Nina, holding the light, looked over his shoulder with feverish earnestness, he wrote:—

"I, Thomas Méchin, promise to marry Philippina Sano this day week. Should I fail to do so, I will give her my house by the bridge, to be hers forever."

Having signed this pledge, Thomas turned to Nina and said coolly: "I put this day week because you are a lonely girl, Nina, and I must not come dangling here after you. It would not do."

"Then it is true?" was all Nina answered; "it is true?"

"This is Saturday," continued Thomas, still cool and business-like; "so we can have our banns out to-morrow, Nina. You must give me a certificate of your birth, you know."

"And you like me!" said Nina, with a cry between joy and anguish. "It is not pity, as I thought. All Manneville

hates and scorns me—my own mother never liked me—but *you* like me."

"Yes, I like you, Nina; and now you have my pledge," he added, thrusting the paper in her hand and closing her fingers upon it, "but where is yours to me?"

"What pledge can I give you?" asked Nina, opening her eyes in wonder.

"Well, Nina, when I wanted to kiss you seven years ago, you bit me, and when I was going to kiss you a while back, you called me names. So now, if you will give me an honest kiss, such a kiss as a good girl gives to the man who is to be her husband in a week, I shall hold you pledged to me as I am pledged to you."

Nina blushed and smiled divinely, Thomas thought, then putting her two hands on his shoulders she held up her face to his, modestly, yet frankly.

"And now," she said, when he had kissed her, "tell me why you like me."

She had not moved away, and the face that looked up to his was the loveliest that Thomas had ever seen.

"You are beautiful, Nina," he replied in a low voice, "but it is not that. Seven years ago I found you not far from here, a poor, forlorn child, mad with despair. I had done you a great wrong, and that wrong seemed to make you mine. When I took you in my arms that night, Nina, and tried to soothe you, I felt that you belonged to me, and from that hour I was fond of you. I did not know how; I was only a lad; but I soon found it out. And now, Nina, you will marry me this day week."

"Yes," answered Nina dreamily.

"And, Nina, we will spend our wedding-day with my uncle, who lives beyond Fontaine. He is old, and cannot come to us."

Again Nina said "yes." So Thomas improved his opportunity. He did not speak about the pitcher, knowing Nina need carry a pitcher no more, but he spoke about going to mass every Sunday, and Nina, who looked as if she could never say him nay, again replied softly, "I will do as you wish."

"And now good-night, Nina," said Thomas, with a sigh, "for I must go and I must not come often either; for I do not want you to be talked about, as you are a lonely girl."

"Are you rich?" asked Nina, suddenly.

"I am not, Nina, but neither am I poor."

"I am rich," she said, with sparkling

eyes; "I found five hundred francs in silver, hidden in my mother's mattress. And I have jewels, too," added Nina, "earrings, brooches, and chains. They have come down to me from the Sanos, who were great people once; but when they fell down in the world, my mother was ashamed, and that was why we came here."

Thomas smiled at her boasting, and again said "good-night." He had scarcely reached the river when Nina overtook him with a light in her hand. She wanted to put the plank in its place, she said; but Thomas asked, a little shortly, if he could not wade his way out as he had waded it in?

"You waded through that cold water!" said Nina, who had not thought of it before, and who shuddered to think of it now, as she heard it gurgling at her feet in the darkness. "And there are deep places in it, and you might have been drowned."

"I can swim," replied Thomas, drily. "Go in, Nina."

"Ah! you like me, you do like me," she said. The flickering light fell on her face, and Thomas could read there the ever new wonder which this strange tale of love wakened in the girl's heart. He did not ask if she liked him; she was to be his wife that day week; Thomas wanted to know no more, and so they parted.

Early the next morning Thomas went over to the island. He found Nina very well, and at her loom, though it was Sunday. Somewhat austere he informed her that she would have to give that up, and somewhat defiantly Nina answered, "Indeed." A change had come over Nina since they had parted, but Thomas chose to be blind. He explained his visit by asking for her certificate of birth, which she handed him at once, and seeing her so far compliant, Thomas requested his betrothed to go to high mass with him that morning. Without hesitation Nina answered that he would find her under the church porch at half past ten.

At a quarter past ten Thomas was prowling round the church, in a manner that surprised Manneville; but surprise became amazement when, as the half struck, Nina, the witch, who had not entered the church for years, joined him under the porch. She was dressed as no girl in Manneville had been dressed before; for she wore a silk petticoat and a velvet jacket. The little cap perched

on the top of her head was of costly lace, her long earrings were of gold, a gold chain was wound three times round her neck, and her little ungloved hands showed a ring on every finger. Of course, when she went in with Thomas and sat down by his side, on the bench of the Méchins, Manneville knew what was coming before the curé read the banns. When mass was over Thomas and Nina left the church arm-in-arm, and had a walk on the road to Fontaine, as is the Sunday custom of Manneville; then they turned back together till they came to the island. As they parted Thomas told Nina that he would come and see her before the next Saturday.

"Why so?" she asked, with one foot on the plank which she was going to cross.

"To talk about the house."

"There is no need," replied Nina, and without even looking at him, she went on.

Thomas lingered about the spot, and in the Sabbath stillness he soon heard her loom at work again.

The young man could not wait till his wedding-day to know how it fared with Nina. On the Wednesday evening he stole into the island, and going round to the window of Nina's cottage, he looked in at her. She stood by the table, the beautiful girl who was to be his wife so soon. She was making up a bundle, into which she slipped something that glittered like gold, as it left her hand, and Thomas thought that it looked very like her chain. It was not for her beauty that he loved her, but yet how handsome she was! Never had he seen a face like hers, so witching, so soft, so fair, 'spite her dark eyes. Surely, it was something to have that charming face ever before him, all the days of his life! Suddenly Nina, leaving the table, went up to the window. In a moment Thomas had slipped round the cottage. He stayed a good while there watching the door. When he came back, the window was black, and the lovely vision was gone. "It is not worth while going home," thought Thomas, so still watching the door, he walked about the island till the stars faded out of the sky and it grew rosy red in the blush of dawn. Just as the birds began to twitter, the cottage door opened, and Nina came out with her bundle in her hand. She crossed the plank; she left Manneville; she took the road to Fontaine; she walked on till she reached the wayside cross, then happening to look back

she saw Thomas close behind her. He put no questions; he expressed no wonder; but he walked by her side as if they were bent on the same journey, and must needs take the same road. Nina walked on for a quarter of an hour, then suddenly stood still and, without a word, turned back towards Manneville. Thomas turned back too, merely saying:

"Let me carry your bundle, Nina."

She let him take it from her hand, and so they went back till they reached the island. Without attempting to enter it with her, Thomas gave Nina her bundle again, and with a kindly good-morning, he left her.

They were to be married on the Saturday. On the Friday afternoon Thomas went to Nina's cottage, and merely putting in his head at the door, he said briefly:

"Are you coming to confession, Nina?"

"Why should I?" asked Nina, turning round sharply.

"Because the curé will not marry us otherwise," shortly replied Thomas.

Nina pondered awhile, then said she would go to the church presently; but when Thomas said he would wait for her, she saw she could not get rid of him, and with an impatient frown, she walked out of the cottage.

"Lock the door, Nina," said Thomas.

"There is no need."

Thomas took out the key and put it in his pocket.

"Are you already master?" she asked.

"I am master in your house and you are mistress in mine, Nina."

Nina smiled scornfully. As they crossed the bridge, Thomas said carelessly, that as they were too early for the curé, perhaps Nina would come in and look at the house.

"Shall I not see it to-morrow?" said Nina.

"Do you see that window?" persisted Thomas. "Well, I used to stand there and wait to see you come out of the *Passée* on the bridge; but now you will be in and not out, so I have had a platform made and your chair put up on it, that I may see you from the end of the bridge, when I come home of an evening."

Nina looked at him in wonder, then with a defiant laugh, she asked if he thought she should sit up there to be looked at?

"But when you do sit there I shall see you," he insisted composedly.

He was passing by the door of his own

house, when Nina asked impatiently why he did not open it? Thomas muttered something about all the people being out, then taking the key of the house-door out of his pocket, he put it into Nina's hand, saying:

"I have locked your door; open mine. Nina."

Nina smiled almost kindly as she opened the door of the house that was to be hers on the morrow. At once she turned into the parlour. It had all been scoured and scrubbed and beeswaxed, so that it shone again, and on the platform in the window stood an old arm-chair with a bright new red cushion. Nina, who looked at nothing else, went straight up to it, lightly climbed up the step, sat down in the chair, and thence looked down at Thomas, whose gladness sparkled in his eyes.

"You had that chair put here for me?" she said.

"Yes, Nina, for you!"

"What for?" she asked, as if she had forgotten.

"I have told you — to see you when I come home."

"Can that be true?" she exclaimed almost incredulously.

"Why not, Nina? I never liked anything half so well as to look at you."

Nina bent her dark eyes full upon his face. She found nothing there that belied his words. Neither spoke, but they looked at each other so till Nina turned away, and leaned back in the chair, pale as death.

"You are ill," cried Thomas, startled at a change so sudden.

She replied faintly that she was not ill, but she seemed in a strange sort of trance. Her left arm rested on one of the elbows of the arm-chair, her right hand supported her cheek, her eyes gazed out of the window like the eyes of one in a dream, then suddenly she started to her feet and asked if it were not time to go to the church. Her colour had come back and Nina looked herself again.

Thomas had a clear conscience and led a straight life; the curé had soon dismissed him with a blessing. But what tale had Nina to tell that she was so long about it? Was there some dark secret in her past life, some unsuspected guilt or shame, that the little church had become quite grey when Nina rose at length, and came back to the bench where Thomas sat waiting? There were tears on her pale face, and her look shunned

his piercing gaze, and her voice was faint and low as she whispered that she was ready. Thomas asked rather severely if she would not say a prayer first, and Nina, with unusual obedience, knelt down by his side and prayed as he bade her. Indeed, she prayed so long that Thomas had to tell her the sexton was waiting to close the church. They went out together after being reminded, under the porch, by the curé, who was going away too, that he would expect them early; and walking side by side, they went down the hill, passed by the house of Thomas, and crossed the bridge.

The moon was rising as they reached the *Passée*. Her soft, pale light stole in through the trees and fell across the path in broad patches. The evening was mild for the season of the year, but Nina walked very slowly by her lover's side, like one ill at ease; then suddenly she stood still and said she must sit down. There was a low, grassy bank close by. Thomas took her to it, and Nina sank, rather than sat at the root of a tree. He asked if he should bring her some water.

"No," she answered in a weak, low voice; "it will soon be over."

Thomas stood by her side and waited. The spot was lonely, the night was very still, only now and then could he hear the murmur of the little river gliding by. Suddenly there broke on this stillness a voice of lament that went to his very heart, for Nina was weeping bitterly. Every sob and moan she uttered thrilled him with a secret pain, yet he put no questions. At length she grew calmer, and wondering at his silence.

"You do not ask what ails me," she said; "perhaps you do not care to know, and yet I must tell you, though —"

"Tell me nothing your husband should not hear, Nina," he interrupted sternly. "We are to be married to-morrow morning. I want to know nothing; let bygones be bygones. Such as you are, for better for worse, I take you, but tell me nothing. You have tried me much, I have borne it, but you see you might try me too much."

Nina was silent awhile, then she said very sadly, "I must tell you, though I know that this time you will hate me for it."

"Nina —"

"I must. It would kill me to keep it back; besides, I should tell it to you all the same in the end. You had better know it before I am your wife."

"I suppose I must go through with it,"

muttered Thomas, setting his teeth; "yet I would give something never to know what you have done, Nina."

"I have done nothing," sorrowfully said the girl, "but I have a bad, hard heart, and I have been ill-used, and when the curé once bade me be patient under it, I scorned him and set my face against heaven! and all my misery I laid to your door, and so I thought, as you gave me the opportunity, that I would have my revenge."

"Well," said Thomas.

"I would lead you to our very marriage morning, and when I stood before the maire and the priest, and you had said 'yes' and taken me for your wife, I would say 'no,' and make you as great a byword among your people as you had ever made me."

This was not what Thomas had feared, yet it was a terrible blow. He could not speak at once; at length he said: "You really meant that, Nina?"

"Yes," she answered faintly, "I did. I thought to go away once, but you followed me and brought me back, and so I thought I would show you that you were not my master."

"When you went to the church with me this evening, did you mean it, Nina?"

"Yes, I meant it till —" She paused.

"Till when, Nina?"

"It was in the house that my heart failed me," she said, without answering his question. "When I saw the chair you had put there for me, and I sat in it and looked out at the bridge, and thought how you had stood and looked out for me, day after day, loving me, though I hated you, and how sure you felt that I would become your wife on the morrow, and had put that chair there to see me as you came home, my heart failed me. My purpose seemed to die away from me; I tried to keep it fast, but I could not. The great love you bore was too much for all my hate and scorn, and so it prevailed over me, and as I sat in the chair, I said to myself, 'I cannot do it — no, I cannot do it!'"

"Is that all, Nina?"

"Almost all. I told the curé all about it, and he bade me repent, and be a good wife to you. He did not bid me tell you this, but it had been too much for me, for as we came up the *Passée*, you walking by my side, suspecting nothing, I felt that I must die unless I told you, and now I have told you, and you can deal with me as you please, and if you like to scorn me to-morrow as I meant to



scorn you, why you may, and so you will have your revenge."

She looked up at him in humble penitence. Thomas did not answer her at once; he was gazing down at her as she sat almost at his feet, with her hands clasped round her knees and her pale face, on which the moonlight fell, raised up to his as in the silent expectation of her sentence.

"And so," said Thomas sternly, "when I took you in my arms to-morrow week and kissed you, as an honest man may kiss the girl who is to be his wife — so all the time you meant to betray me with that kiss, as Judas betrayed his master."

Nina started to her feet, and raised her trembling hands to heaven. "As I have a judge there," she said, "I did not mean it then."

"Then what did you mean?" asked Thomas, still sternly angry.

But Nina only flung herself on the earth, trembling aloud in the bitterness of her anguish.

"What did you mean?" he asked, without relenting. "I, like a fool, did think that I read something very like love in those black eyes of yours, as I took you in my arms that evening, but if you had loved me then you could not have planned to betray me the next morning. No, Nina, you could not. True, you have confessed your sin — but that is remorse, no more."

Nina did not answer at once. When she spoke all she said was, "Deal with me as you like. I have deserved no mercy from you. But you told me once that I was no witch; well then, *you* are no sorcerer, Maître Thomas — no, you are not."

Thomas did not seem to understand this taunt, for all he said was, and he spoke rather drily, "Well, will you marry me to-morrow, Nina?"

"Yes," she answered in a low tone, "if you will have me."

"And will you, on leaving the church, go with me to my uncle's?"

"Yes," she answered again, "I will."

"And, Nina, you will not work on Sundays now, you know."

"No. I will not."

"And you will say your prayers and go to church and be a good Christian, Nina?"

And Nina, as humble as she had been scornful, still said "Yes." Thomas then drily supposed it was all settled, whereupon Nina rose, and walked on. Thomas walked by her side, and uttered never a word, till he handed her the key at the

door of her cottage, and said "Good-night." Nina stood with the key in her hand, looking after him.

"Ah, I should not have told you!" she exclaimed, stung at his coldness, "for now you will hate me."

"Do you like me, Nina?" asked Thomas, half turning back.

"You know I do," said poor Nina, "you know I have liked you since you said, 'Will you marry me, Nina?' I have striven hard against it because I have a bad, hard heart, but it has prevailed over me, and you know it."

"You have liked me seven days, Nina. Well, I have liked you seven years. So, perhaps, I am not going to leave off now. And yet you should not have told me! For suppose I were to treat you to-morrow as you meant to treat me! Wickedness often breeds wickedness, Nina! or worse still, suppose I were to marry you and take you to my uncle's, but instead of bringing you home to Manneville, drop you on the road, and cast you away. No law could make me live with you, Nina, and should I not have my revenge then?"

"Ay, indeed," said Nina, faintly.

"Well, let bygones be bygones," resumed Thomas. "Only be early to-morrow, Nina. My uncle lives a good way off."

"I shall be early," she answered, and so they parted. Early though the lovers were the next morning, all Manneville was as early to see them married, and when they left the church man and wife — it was the organist who gave Nina away — all Manneville followed them out. Nina looked modest and lovely, and when Thomas lifted her up into the little car that was waiting for them at the church-gate, and sprang up by her side, he could not help looking both triumphant and happy.

"She has bewitched him," exclaimed Laure, as the car drove off.

The curé overheard the remark and smiled. "No, no, my good Laure," said he; "it is Thomas who has bewitched Nina."

"Well then, does he mean to starve her?" irrelevantly asked Laure, "that he takes her off without giving her a bit of breakfast?"

But Thomas had no such intention. As they drove past the little wood on the road to Fontaine, he asked Nina, and it was the first time he had spoken, if she would not get down and have something to eat. She said "yes;" so they alight-



ed, and sitting down under the shade of the spreading tree, in the spot where he had once found her sleeping, they had their little meal there. The sun was high by this, and the air was warm. Some bees made a drowsy hum in the shady place, the very stamping of Thomas's horse, as he wandered about, grazing and whisking his tail at the flies, was enough to send one to sleep. Nina's nights had been very wakeful ones of late; besides, Thomas said never a word. She closed her weary eyes, she let her head sink on her bosom. In a moment, she scarcely knew how, Nina was fast asleep.

When she woke up a long slanting sun-beam, stealing on the grass by her side, was her only companion. Thomas had vanished, the horse, and car, the very tokens of the recent meal were gone, Nina was quite alone.

Had Thomas fulfilled his half threat? Had he deserted his young wife on her wedding-day, and more than paid her out for all her scorn? Whether such were Nina's thoughts or not she neither called on nor looked for her husband, but she clasped her hands round her knees and looked straight before her with sad, grave eyes. Presently she heard a step behind her, and the voice of Thomas asked cheerily if she had been long awake.

"Not long," quietly answered Nina. Something wrong about the car had obliged Thomas to take it to a farm behind the hill, and get it mended, and now, as time enough had been wasted, they resumed their journey.

What need is there to tell how the uncle of Thomas and the uncle's wife both liked Nina, what a wedding-feast there was, and what merry-making went on till Saturday came round again, and Thomas could take Nina home? As they drove past the wood, Thomas nodded towards it over his shoulder, and said: "Well, Nina, when you woke and found yourself alone there, what did you think?"

"I thought you would come back for me," answered Nina, with a shy smile.

"I was close by all the time, Nina," whispered Thomas, and as he said it the last faint drop of bitterness that might have lingered in his heart died away from it and returned no more. But whether he had bewitched Nina or Nina had bewitched him, is an open question to this day in Manneville.

From Macmillan's Magazine.

PETRARCH: HIS LIFE, TIMES, AND WORKS.

PART II.

THE romantic and poetical aspect of Petrarch's character has, for the most part, been alone considered by the generality of readers, but it should be remembered that he was actuated by two other powerful passions — the love of his country and the love of knowledge. With regard to the first, we are not aware of the extent of his political influence until we come to investigate his life. Five hundred years have rolled by since his active mind and eloquent tongue have been at rest from earthly labours; and yet the struggle between the temporal and the spiritual power of the Papal See, which so troubled his mind, has only ceased, if indeed it has ceased, within the last two years. The other struggle for the liberty and independence of his country, which was represented in his time by Rienzi, has been renewed century after century, in all the various phases through which Italy has passed, till quite recently, when, subsiding into quiet and apparent harmony, she has at last become "Italia una," very different from the "Italia una" to whom Petrarch cried in vain, "Pace, pace, pace."

It is a fact worthy of notice that the "seventy years' captivity," as it is called, during which the Papal See was established at Avignon, should have begun one year after the birth of Petrarch (1305), and, with the brief interval of Urban the Fifth's three years' sojourn at Rome, should have ended just three years after the poet's death. Seven times the Papal chair at Avignon was destined to be filled in the lifetime of Petrarch. The first Avignonese Pope, Clement V., died in 1314; to him succeeded John XXII., and in the last year of his pontificate Petrarch thought his hopes were about to be realized, for he announces in one of his sonnets that —

Burthened with holy keys and Papal robe,  
His steps CHRIST'S earthly Vicar homeward  
turns.\*

But these hopes were extinguished by the death of this Pope in the following year.

Petrarch, however, undaunted, at once addressed a Latin Epistle to his succes-

\* Sonn. vi. : —

Il Vicario di Cristo con la soma  
Delle chiavi e del manto al nido torna.

sor, Benedict XII., imploring him to return to Rome. But neither the description of her ancient glory nor of her present miserable condition could induce the Pope to return, although he rewarded the author of the learned Epistle by the gift of a canonry in Lombez; while, at the same time, he ordered a magnificent palace to be built for himself at Avignon. He was succeeded by Clement VI., and to him the Romans applied, as they had done to his predecessor, to restore the sacred seat to Rome. Petrarch, at that time in Rome, having just received the laurel crown, was among the ambassadors chosen by the citizens to present their supplication, and the famous Cola da Rienzo was another member of the embassy.\* Both pleaded the cause of Rome with much eloquence before Clement VI. and Rienzo elaborately exposed the demands of the citizens:—

1. That the Pope should assume the title and functions of Senator of Rome, in order to extinguish the civil wars kindled by the Roman barons.

2. That he should return to his pontifical chair on the banks of the Tiber.

3. That he should grant permission for the jubilee instituted by Boniface VIII.† to be held every fifty years, and not at the end of a century.

Petrarch's eloquence was again rewarded by the gift of the priory of Migliarino, but he complains in his letters that he cannot induce the Pope even to wish to see Italy, although he conceded the point of the jubilee every fifty years. The poet gave vent to his indignation against the Papal Court in his letters "sine titulo," in which he unsparingly condemns, with a courage worthy of Dante, the corruption of the clergy and times. The higher the clerical positions occupied, the more vehemence does he display in exposing and condemning the evil lives of those who held them. It was one of his most earnest desires to reform the discipline of the Church, although, like Dante and Savonarola, he had a firm belief in her doctrines. The system of Church government, which had been bad in Dante's time, became much worse, according to Petrarch, at Avignon, which he compares with the Assyrian Babylon for wickedness and

corruption. Innocent VI., a French Pope, succeeded to Clement VI. He had no wish to leave his native country, and was deaf to Petrarch's entreaties. Moreover, he thought the Italian poet a magician, because he could read Virgil!\*

But when Urban V., the next Pope, wrote to offer him the canonry of Carpentras, Petrarch seized the opportunity in his reply to implore him to return to Rome, pointing out with severe frankness the manifold evils resulting from the position of the Papal Court at Avignon. This time his entreaties and remonstrances were not without effect, for at Easter in the following year (1368), the Pope, regardless of the complaints of the King of France and of his own Cardinals, who did not like to leave the rich palaces which they had built, left Avignon and four months afterwards made a solemn entry into Rome. Petrarch hastened to express his joy in a letter of congratulation to Urban V., who invited him to come to Rome. Petrarch was, however, not allowed to see with his own eyes his darling wish accomplished, for, having set out on his journey, he fell ill and was obliged to return to Arqua. Shortly afterwards he received the further shock of hearing that the Pope, regardless of the warning of Santa Brigitta that he would die if he returned to Avignon, set off on his return to France, and expired immediately after his arrival at Avignon (1372).

Petrarch lived during only two years of the pontificate of the successor of Urban V. (Gregory XI.), not long enough to witness the end of the seventy years' captivity in 1377. In spite of his hardy remonstrances with the Papal Court, he was constantly offered, by the various Popes, offices of the highest importance, such as the post of Segretario Apostolico, which he refused five times.

It is true that he accepted four ecclesiastical preferments—the canonry of Lombez, conferred upon him by Benedict XII. in 1335; the priory of St. Nicola di Migliarino, in 1342; the canonry of Coloreto in the church of Parma, in 1346, to which was joined the archidiaconate of that church in 1350; and the canonry of Padua, procured for him by Jacopo da Carrara, in 1349. But he steadily refused any cure of souls. In one of his letters he observes: "I never would, nor will I ever, accept any

\* There have been many disputes as to whether Rienzo was companion to Petrarch on this embassy, but sufficient reason for giving credit to the fact is to be found in the new Italian edition of Petrarch's letters by Fracassetti, vol. ii. p. 194.

† See Inf. c. xviii.

• Lettere Senili, L. 3.

prelacy, neither any cure of souls, however richly endowed the benefice. I have enough to do with the care of my own soul, if indeed, by God's mercy, I am able to suffice to that."

His political influence was not confined to the Popes only. As he shared Dante's views with respect to the Church, in like manner he entertained his opinions as to the Emperors of Germany. Distracted from one end to the other by civil wars between princes, none of whom were strong enough to keep the peace as arbiter—harassed by factions, desolated by brigandage, which was encouraged by the nobles, Petrarch saw no hope for the restoration of Italy except from without; and he echoes Dante's passionate cry of "O Alberto tedesco,"\* in his appeals to Charles IV., Emperor of Germany,† to descend into Italy. It was most strange that a private individual should have dared to make himself not only the counsellor but the admonisher and reprover of a powerful foreign sovereign.‡ But the flame of patriotism so kindled the soul of Petrarch that he considered it a crime to remain silent.

"In the midst of the universal silence which prevailed," he says in his letter to Urban V., "my conscience urged me so strongly to appeal to the Emperor of Rome and advise his descent into Italy, that I felt I should be guilty of a crime if I remained silent." The reply of the Emperor, which is to be found verbatim in the letters already quoted (vol. ii. 83), justifies the conduct of Petrarch in writing to him. Far from being displeased, the Emperor expresses an earnest desire to know personally the "privilegiato abitator d'Elicona" who wrote to him, while the effect of Petrarch's remonstrances and entreaties is to be seen in his descent into Italy in the year 1354. In reply to the joyful letter of congratulation addressed to him on this occasion by the poet, Charles IV. summoned him to meet him at Mantua. Petrarch was there eight days, and witnessed his negotiations with the Lords of the Lombard League, at whose head the Emperor was now placed. Charles was very desirous of taking Petrarch with him to Rome to

witness his coronation; this, however, the poet firmly declined. But, alas the vanity of all earthly hopes, even when they seem to be realized! Petrarch's two chief projects for the restoration of his country—the return of the Popes to Rome and the descent of the Emperor of Germany into Italy—whereby he hoped to re-unite the old factions of Guelph and Ghibelline, were both accomplished only to be immediately undone. Just as Urban V. had fled back to Avignon, leaving Rome in a worse condition than he found it, so with Charles IV., who had solemnly sworn to the Pope that he would not sleep in Rome; \* no sooner was the ceremony of his coronation accomplished in that city, than he hastened to leave it and Italy, upon which he shortly afterwards intended to make war. Petrarch was employed as an ambassador by Galeazzo Visconti, to turn the Emperor from his purpose, and went to Nuremberg to seek him. The Emperor reassured the ambassador by saying that the affairs of Germany were too pressing to admit of his making war upon Italy. Afterwards, in 1357, he invested the poet with the dignity of Count Palatine in its full glory, with all its rights and privileges. It is also on record that he presented him with a golden cup.

Such, then, was Petrarch's influence over the two great powers of the world at that time—the Pope and the Emperor—the "two Suns," as Dante calls them, "whose several beams cast light on either way, the world's and God's."† But he was also connected with many other crowned heads and princes of Europe. Robert, King of Naples, was one of his earliest friends, and Petrarch's connection with him is of a literary, not of a political character. When the laurel crown of the poet was offered to Petrarch by the citizens of Rome, he first went to Naples (1341), to the court "of the great and most learned King Robert, who was distinguished not only for his wise government, but also for his great learning,"‡ in order to be examined by the King if he were deserving of the coveted honour. After an examination of three days, he was proclaimed worthy. In further proof of his esteem, the King made him his almoner, and took off his own royal robe, which he put upon him, and sent him

\* Purg. c. vi.

† When before his election Charles IV. came to Avignon to obtain the favour of the Pope, it is said that on some great festive occasion he discerned Laura de Sade, and solemnly kissed her forehead in the presence of all the guests as a tribute to her beauty and her fame. This event Petrarch commemorates in Sonnet cxxxi.

‡ Lett. Fam. x. 2.

\* Historical fact.

† Purg. xvi. 1—

Duo Soli che l'una e l'altra strada facean veder del mondo e di Dio.

‡ Epist. ad Post.

with two ambassadors to Rome to be crowned. At the death of King Robert, two years later, Petrarch was sent by Pope Clement VI. as ambassador to Giovanna, Queen of Naples, who had succeeded to her father's throne. The young Queen, who inherited her father's taste for learning, was anxious to become better acquainted with Petrarch, and made him her chaplain.

In 1360 he was sent by Galeazzo Visconti to Paris, to congratulate King John of France upon his deliverance from captivity in England since the battle of Poitiers. He was also employed several times as ambassador in his native country. He was the intimate friend of Andrea Dandolo, and negotiated a treaty between the two famous republics of Genoa and Venice. The harangue which he delivered on this occasion is preserved as a marvel of eloquence in the library at Venice. Once again in this year, before his death (1373), he went to Venice to arrange the terms of a peace between that Republic and his friends the Carraresi of Padua. It was the last service that he rendered his country, whose civil wars he had striven all his life to appease.

In the life of Petrarch, as in the lives of other great men, there are some strange contradictions, and his conduct with respect to the Roman Tribune Rienzo presents a curious contrast to the rest of his political career. In the nineteenth century, when the universal cry is for liberty and freedom from all restraint, no apology is needed for the enthusiasm which the enterprise of Rienzo awakened in Petrarch's breast, and which poured itself forth in the well-known immortal *Canzone*, "*Spirto gentil*."\*

The mind of Petrarch was imbued with classical studies; he was the fervent admirer of the ancient heroic deeds of his native country, and his affection for her increased the more she was oppressed and torn asunder by civil discords of which he was both the eyewitness and the victim, being through their means deprived of his patrimony and an exile. Proud, moreover, of the citizenship of Rome, which had been accorded to him on the Campidoglio the same day as his laurel wreath, we cannot wonder if, when he heard proclaimed from the summit of that famous hill the restoration of liberty, the destruction of tyrants, the reign of peace and justice — the "*buono stato*,"

as Rienzo himself called his new government — he felt so full of hope as to shut his eyes to the uncertainty and peril of the enterprise, and gave himself up, with all the power of his genius and the influence of his name, to bring about its accomplishment. Such revolutions were then comparatively new to the modern world; their dangerous character, the fearful jeopardy in which they place the lives of the thousands which they profess to benefit, had not then been experienced, as they have been over and over again since; a good result being the rare exception, and not the general rule. It is impossible, therefore, to blame Petrarch for believing Rienzo to be as high-minded, as disinterested in the love of his country, as he was himself; for thinking him to be as incapable of abusing as he appeared to be capable of using his power. On the contrary, there is much to admire in the disinterestedness which led Petrarch to risk, by his chivalrous defence of the Roman Tribune, the favours and benefits which he had so long enjoyed from the noble and powerful Roman family of the Colonna, whose political views were diametrically opposite to those entertained by Rienzo. Some biographers aver that Petrarch carried this disinterestedness too far, and, forgetting his obligations to the family who had been his benefactors, he wished them sacrificed, in common with the other great Roman families whom Rienzo attacked, to the general good of the cause. In one of his letters there seems to be some foundation for this statement. He writes:—

"As to the two families who are at the head of the present tumult, the first (the Orsini) are no personal enemies of mine; the other (the Colonna) are, it is well known, not only my friends but the objects of my deep affection and veneration; nor does there exist any princely family in this world more dear to me. Yet the Republic is dearer to me than they are, and dearer still do I hold the peace and future welfare of Rome and Italy."\*

Petrarch, as has been already mentioned, had formed a friendship with Rienzo, when both, belonging to the same embassy, had used their utmost endeavours to induce the Pope to return to Avignon. When, five years later, the news reached him of what Rienzo had accomplished in Rome — that he had

\* *Canz. ii.*

\* *Lettere di F. Petrarca, vol. ii. p. 192.*

driven out the quarrelling nobles, had re-established liberty, had been given a dictatorship by the Roman people, and was ruling wisely and prudently—he thought his fervent longings for the prosperity and grandeur of Rome were about to be fulfilled. He wrote to Rienzo a letter of congratulation, and defended him, at some personal risk, before the Papal Court. Even when the Tribune, intoxicated with success and power, exhibited failings quite unworthy of the principles by which he pretended to be guided, and lost partisans while he gained enemies, Petrarch ignored his follies and continued to correspond with him, imploring him not to betray the cause of liberty and justice. After the fall of Rienzo in 1348, when, driven from Rome, he had wandered about from Court to Court, and had finally been delivered up to the Pope by the Emperor, Petrarch again espoused his cause. He besought the Romans to come to the assistance of their Tribune, and on their refusing to help him he finally saved the life of Rienzo by spreading the rumour that he was a poet, as it was then considered sacrilege to take the life of anyone belonging to the “profession sacrée.” Despite the failures of Rienzo and his miserable end, Petrarch never lost the enthusiasm which he had once felt for him. The charm, however, of his liberal politics seems to have been dispelled from Petrarch’s mind and to have been succeeded by totally opposite ideas, which are shown in his entreaties to the Emperor to descend into Italy. “A democracy,” says Mr. Burke, in his “Reflections on the French Revolution,” “has many striking points of resemblance with a tyranny.”\*

It now only remains to speak of the literary influence exercised by Petrarch over his country, and how far he contributed to the revival of literature. He was, in fact, the first real restorer of polite letters. His fine taste led him to appreciate the beauties of Cicero and Virgil, and his ardent enthusiasm for them inspired his country with a thirst for classical knowledge. With the exception of Boccaccio, no one else had so keenly at heart the disinterring and bringing to the light the long-neglected Latin and Greek classics. In order to accomplish this, he wrote to all the learned men of the day, and sought among the ancient archives of cities

and monasteries. By these means he discovered, in Venice, some of Cicero’s letters, in Arezzo the oratorical institutions of Quintilian, in Liège two of Cicero’s harangues, which he copied with his own hand (although he tells us the ink was as yellow as saffron)\* because his indignation was so great against the *amanuensi* of the time, whose carelessness led them to commit the grossest errors in transcribing. Had it not been for Petrarch’s unwearied efforts, many manuscripts would have perished, as several had done no long time before, forgotten and abandoned to dust and vermin in the monasteries.

The Greek classics were also destined to revive in the fourteenth century, and the glory of re-awakening in the minds of men the love of Greek poets and orators fell also to the lot of Petrarch and Boccaccio. The Greek friar Barlaam, a Calabrian by birth, but long resident in Greece, and considered one of the most learned men of that age, was entrusted by the Greek Emperor Cantacuzene with a mission to Italy. In the course of his travels, perhaps in pursuit of the Papal Court, he came to Avignon, where he met Petrarch, who, having heard of his fame, begged to be instructed by him in Greek. Petrarch afterwards pursued the study of the language with Leonzio Pilato, a disciple of Barlaam; but notwithstanding the assistance of two such great masters, he does not seem to have made much progress, and it was a source of some disappointment to him not to be able to read with ease a copy of Homer, a most rare book in Italy at that time, which had been presented to him by Nicola Sigeros, Prætor of Romania. Still, although the attempts of Petrarch and Boccaccio were not attended with any immediate success, yet they excited a desire for learning, and prepared the way for the real revival of Greek literature a few years later. It may be that Petrarch was hindered from attaining to any perfection in Greek by the careful and lifelong study which he bestowed upon the Latin classics. Cicero and Virgil were his models both in prose and in verse, and he strove to form his style upon them in the folio volume of twelve hundred pages which contains his Latin works. This style, although far above the common order of Latin then employed in the schools, is considered

† Burke on the French Revolution, p. 144

\* Lett. Sen. xv. 2.



inferior to that of the scholars of the sixteenth century, and the fastidious taste of Erasmus was offended by the incorrectness and harshness of his style. Erasmus complains that Petrarch's writings, although full of thought, are defective in expression, and display the marks of labour without the polish of elegance. Nevertheless, whatever may be their demerits, there is no doubt that Petrarch rendered an incalculable service to literature in pointing out the road to good Latinity. If the great writers of the sixteenth century surpassed him in Latin prose and verse, still the glory must remain with him of being the first of the moderns who discovered the track of the ancients, and pointed out the road by which it was to be followed. The effect of his influence was like that ascribed by Dante to Virgil, the high moral tone of whose writings prepared men's minds for Christianity.

"Thou didst" (says Dante,\* addressing Virgil),

As one

Who journeying through the darkness bears a light

Behind that profits not himself, but makes his followers wise.

The principal Latin works of Petrarch (the whole are too numerous to be cited in this paper) may be classed under the following heads:—Philosophical Treatises; Historical Works; Dialogues; his Secret, entitled "De contemptu Mundi"—containing various clues to the events of his life, his tastes and character, and his most secret thoughts, but never intended to be made public; twelve Eclogues, which are covert satires upon the Court at Avignon; his Letters. In imitation of Cicero, he formed a habit of writing to his friends upon every subject, and although he burnt chests full of letters, seventeen books remain and have been published, making about three hundred letters in number. In these are to be found the whole mind of Petrarch; they partake more of the nature of treatises than of letters, and they are full of interesting details.† They are also most important as a history of the events and manners of his age; it is, however, to be hoped that the

portraits of the Papal Court are overcharged. But whether he writes to the potentates of Italy, the Colonna family, Rienzo, for an instant master of Rome, the Prelates and Cardinals, the Emperor of Germany, or the Popes who succeeded each other upon their thrones at Avignon—he still maintains a noble candour, and that quiet dignity belonging to philosophy and literature, the influence of which is felt and recognized even by the rulers of the earth.

His letters to his intimate friends prove that he was as steady in friendship as he was constant in love. The "Lettere delle Cose Familiari," which extended over a period of thirty-five years, he dedicates to his friend Luigi di Campinia,\* because "cominciai col tuo nome," he says in the last of these letters, "finisco con quello;" and his friendship for "Lello," the "Lelio" of his letters, lasted equally long. Both these friendships were formed at the same time, at the house of Giacomo Colonna, Bishop of Lombez, the news of whose death reached Petrarch the same day as that of Laura, and to whom he paid the high compliment of coupling the two names together in one sonnet—

My Pillar's fallen, my green Laurel dead.‡

He also addressed to him the beautiful Canzone, "O aspettata in ciel."‡

Philip, Bishop of Cabassoles, and Patriarch of Jerusalem, was another intimate friend. Valchiusa, where Petrarch spent so many years of his life, was in his diocese, and not far from it the Bishop had a country house. He was distinguished more by his talents and the variety of his learning than by the careful performance of his episcopal functions, and Petrarch himself writes to him as "parvo Episcopo et magno Viro." Passing over many other friends who cannot be mentioned for want of space, in 1349 Petrarch became acquainted with Boccaccio, who made a visit to Milan on purpose to see his illustrious fellow-citizen. On this occasion Petrarch presented him with a copy of his Latin Eclogues written in his own hand and Boccaccio in return sent Petrarch from Florence a copy of the "Divina Commedia," which he had himself transcribed. The reply of Petrarch to Boccaccio on the receipt of this present is

\* Cary's Transl. See Purg. xxii. :—

Facesti come quei che va di notte, &c.

† These letters have been translated into Italian by Giuseppe Fracassetti. They were published at Florence in 1866, with the addition of many interesting notes relative to Petrarch's life and times.

\* Luigi di Campinia was the "Socrate" of Petrarch's letters.

† Rotta è l'alta Colonna, e l'verde Lauro.

‡ Sonn. ii. Seconde Parte.



worth reading.\* He positively denies the charge of envy imputed to him, and reproves Boccaccio for supposing that to praise Dante would make him jealous; while he excuses himself for not having read the works of Dante, because he feared such a study would interfere with his own project of writing in the vulgar tongue, and that acquaintance with the "Divina Commedia" would make him either an imitator or a plagiarist. The citizens of Florence, in the year 1351, entrusted Boccaccio with the pleasing task of recalling Petrarch from exile, in letters couched in the most flattering terms, imploring him to return to his native city, and restoring to him his confiscated patrimony. The intimacy between the two friends continued up to the time of Petrarch's death, and some affirm that Petrarch's last hours were spent in translating the "Decamerone," with which he was much delighted, into Latin—the purest Italian into indifferent Latin.

His poem called "Africa" is the last on the list of Petrarch's Latin works, although it was one of his earliest productions. It is a narrative in verse of the exploits of Scipio Africanus. The faults of this poem are said to predominate over its merits, and it is scarcely ever heard of or mentioned now. Petrarch was himself aware of its imperfections; it was painful to him to hear it spoken of, and in his old age he even wished to destroy it. Yet the fame acquired in the world by the first book (dedicated to King Robert of Naples) of this poem procured for Petrarch that crown of "caduchi allori" of which at one time he was so desirous. In the year 1340, on the same day, he received, in his peaceful retreat at Valchiusa, the simultaneous offer of the poet's wreath, from the Chancellor of the University of Paris and from the citizens of Rome. He gave the preference, not unnaturally, to his native country, and was crowned in the Capitol. The Roman Senate revived the custom for Petrarch after many years' disuse. The ceremony was a curious one: the poet walked, surrounded by six of the principal citizens, and preceded by twelve youths of the noblest families of Rome, clothed in scarlet, to the Capitol. After his coronation there, accompanied by the same pompous attendance, he proceeded to St. Peter's, where he consecrated his laurel wreath, by causing it to be hung up in the dome of the church. But now the poem which

obtained for Petrarch this extraordinary mark of honour lies forgotten and unread, while his Italian poetry, which he held in such little esteem that he wrote it on the spare eighty-four pages which remained at the end of his Latin works, has been the delight of Italy and of the scholars of other nations for the last five centuries.

In truth —

The noise

Of worldly fame is but a blast of wind

That blows from divers points and shifts its name,

Shifting the point it blows from.\*

Another contradiction, similar to the political contrast already alluded to, in the life of Petrarch, is to be found in the numerous journeys which he undertook, and which could scarcely have been compatible with his love of quiet and solitude. We read of his peaceful retreats at Valchiusa, at Linterno, and finally at Arqua. And yet, according to Tiraboschi,† this did not prevent him from being the perfect model of a good traveller — "because in the descriptions which he has left behind him of the countries which he saw, he shows us what should be the plan and the observations of a learned traveller. He describes all the memorable things which are to be seen in Paris, in Ghent, in Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, and Lyons, the manners and customs which he observed there, their progress in learning, and all the common traditions in vogue."

He has left behind him a beautiful account of his journey through the kingdom of Naples, and the reflections to which it gave rise.‡ He intended also to visit the Holy Land, but was deterred by the perils of a long sea-voyage; nevertheless, he wrote — for the friend who was going there, and who had asked him to accompany him — the "Itinerarium Syriacum," which describes minutely the places he would pass through on his way, and the things which he ought particularly to observe. It was a book which shed much light on the obscure condition of history and geography of those times. Petrarch even went so far as to make a present of the library of books, which he had collected with so much care, to the Republic of Venice, because he found them such an impediment when

\* Cary's Transl. See *Purg.* xi. : —

Non è il mondan romore altro ch'un fiato.  
Di vento, &c., &c.

† Tir. v. p. 128.

‡ Lett. Fam. v. 4.

\* See Lett. Fam. xxi. 15.

he travelled, for they were so numerous that he was obliged to hire several mules to carry them, and he could not bear to leave any behind. In return, the Venetian Senate issued a decree that the public money should be spent in buying and maintaining, with all the necessary expenses, a suitable house for Petrarch's sole use, and this house was "Il Palazzo delle due Torri nel sestiere di Castello."

It has been seen that Petrarch was the father of Italian lyrical poetry; a zealous and earnest patriot, with his country's best interests always at heart; the restorer of Latinity, whose finest ancient models he rescued from destruction; the promoter of the study of Greek, and he was also a man of science. Some writers even maintain that he believed in the existence of the Antipodes before his countryman discovered them a century later, founding this assumption upon the sonnet in which he describes —

The daylight hastening with winged steps,  
Perchance to gladden the expectant eyes  
Of far-off nations in a world remote.\*

But his fame is sufficiently established without pausing to consider the probability of this supposition.

His life — long if measured by its incidents, although the number of his years was only threescore and ten — was brought to a close at Arqua on the 18th of July, 1374. He died as he had lived, in the pursuit of knowledge and in the improvement of himself and of mankind; for when his servants entered his room they found him dead, sitting in his chair, with his head bent over a book.

His personal character was of a most amiable kind. He neither desired nor despised riches. Without conceit he knew his own worth. He loved fame, but was not eager in the pursuit of it. Liberty and tranquillity were most dear to him, and in order to preserve them he refused many a dignified position, and chance of still greater wealth and power. His habits and tastes were of a most simple nature. Adversity never disheartened him, and the influence of the court and the world never sullied his character, which was firmly established upon the basis of morality and religion. His patience was exemplary, and his vigorous memory never recalled an injury, while his anger was easily appeased. The error of his life, which he acknowledges

with perfect candour in his later poetry, arose from the violence and excess of his passion for Laura, which, although it raised the tone of his moral character, absorbed him too entirely.

Keep the choicest of thy love for God, says Dante (Par. xxvi.); and Petrarch knew that in the early part of his life he had not done this; but what can be more beautiful than the concluding lines of his "Epistle to Posterity"?

"And now I make my prayer to Christ, in order that He may sanctify the close of my earthly life, that He may have mercy upon me and pardon the sins of my youth, remembering them not. . . . And with an earnest heart I pray that it may please God, in His own good time, to guide my long erring and unstable thoughts; that as hitherto they have been scattered over many earthly objects, they may now be centred in Him, the One true, unchangeable, certain, and Supreme Good.

CATHERINE MARY PHILLIMORE.

From The Cornhill Magazine.

JACK AND THE BEAN-STALK.

### XIII.

A GREAT red crescent moon came floating from behind the fresh dark trees. It hung burning gently in the sky, lighting the little garden full of cottage flowers, the white heads of the hollyhocks by which Lina was standing so motionless. This was a home-coming that he had never dreamt of as he hurried along the dark lanes: he thought to himself that if he spoke she would vanish from his eyes, into a flower, a moonbeam, a stray light upon a drift of vapour; but as he waited he heard her say his name in a low tone that struck familiarly on his ear; the vision of the flower and the moonbeam vanished away; it was Lina who remained. She came forward quickly without waiting for him to speak.

"I have seen your mother. I have told her," said Lina, "something that I wanted you to know — that I myself found the lease. You will remember, won't you?" she repeated wistfully. "Shall I tell you the truth? Papa did not know of it; that is the truth. Now he knows what the paper was that he gave you; but I shall trust to you," she said, "whatever the future may bring."

\* Canz. iv. : —  
che 'l di nostro vola  
A gente, che di là forse l'aspetta.

"Indeed you may," said Lefevre, very much moved; "and if you only trust me, I don't care who else —" He stopped short with a look that lighted up even this dim radiance of garden and sweet mystery. Lina's eyes filled with wide happy tears that seemed to come from some long, long distance, as did the voice that was speaking to her. Her whole unreasonable tender heart seemed to go out in gratitude towards the friend who had found her in her trouble, who had understood her unspoken prayer. "You will never tell any one?" she repeated wistfully.

"I saw the lawyer to-day," he answered gravely. "I have told him your father has returned the papers which had been so long mislaid. You and I must never speak of this again to each other, nor to any one else. I hope you will not be unhappy; indeed there is nothing to be afraid of;" and then he was also silent, as they waited face to face. More stars came out, and wide breaths came from beyond the fields, and evening whispers and mysterious hushes, and in the dreamy light their eyes met once and then fell again. Mrs. Lefevre had gone back into the cottage, where the lamp was now alight and shining through a green curtain of garlanded clematis; and here, outside, everything was turning to a silvery radiance—the very words and silence, the sleeping plants, the vapours and light clouds; even sorrow seemed beautiful to Lina at that moment, as she said in a low, sudden voice, "Tell me how it is that I came. I do not know. I don't know," she continued, "how it is. I wanted you to know it all. It is very wrong to come to you—but oh! but you have made me speak to you by your kindness. . . . My poor papa, my poor papa!" sighed the girl with a great irrepressible sigh.

"You came in your kindness," said Hans gravely; "but I can only say, don't let us speak of all this again, and remember that I shall never let any one else speak to me on the subject." As his dark eyes lighted upon Lina they seemed (in her moved fancy) to put a meaning into all the past dead and sorrowful and bitter things among which she had grown up so sadly—to make a link between herself and the whole human race. "Don't you know that I love you?" said Hans by his silence as he looked at her. Lina's own face was moved and sweet in the moonlight. . . . The church clock struck at last, ringing

through the shadows. "I must go," said Lina, remembering herself; and then, still without a word, Hans turned round and walked by her side, crossing the road and coming into the great stubble-field where they could see the country in moonlit miles, and all the stars of heaven assembling. Not far from the Rectory gate some one met them with an exclamation of surprise.

It was Lady Stella, somewhat disturbed, with a lace shawl over her head.

"Lina! I have been looking for you. You missed me." "I had meant to come with Miss Gorges," said Lady Stella, turning to Hans, with, for the first time, some slight indescribable touch of patrician precision and distance in her voice. "I also wished to tell you that we are very glad to hear that you are to have your land after all. My husband has gone up to the Hall, and will speak to his father and say everything, you may be sure, that you would wish said in your interest. Pray don't let us take you any farther out of your way. Come, Lina."

They were gone, without a good-night. Lina, frightened and overwhelmed by her sister's tone, had turned without a word or a look and followed her along the field-path. Hans saw them flitting like ghosts into the shadow of the great walnut-tree.

Lady Stella did not know—how could she?—all that had happened that day, what day it was! This visit had seemed to her a strange and uncalled-for proceeding of Lina's. She had rigid ideas of etiquette, for all her sweet charity of heart. She did not say much, but her displeasure was apparent. "Good-night dearest," she said, a little reproachfully, as Lina was starting. "I think you must wait for me another time. You know I am your chaperone, and it is not usual for young ladies to go about alone. I shall come up and see you early to-morrow."

"Good-night," said Lina passively, as she sank back in a corner of the carriage, and with a crunching jolt the great landau drove off with the pale girl safely shut in. As she passed the low farm-house she saw the light still in the lattice window. How ungrateful she had been! She had left him without a word or a farewell sign. Would he ever know her heart's gratitude? "Never, never," said Lina to herself, bursting into tears in the choking padded darkness.

Never! so people say to themselves, forgetting how short their nevers are. Never! we say; an image of all eternity

makes us reel, as it dazzles before us ; but never is not eternity, only a poor little life wearing away day by day, hour by hour. Seventy or eighty years, and our never is over for us.

Hans had certainly been hurt by Lady Stella's coldness and distance, and by Lina's silent acceptance of her blame ; he had never presumed — it was she who had sought him out ; he had deserved better treatment. They were not to be trusted, these fine ladies.

Some people are born free, some are born slaves by nature — Lina was a slave by nature. A superior slave, but for all that she was not free. Hans was a free-man born — no willing dependant upon a fine lady's caprices. When Lady Stella spoke in that galling tone of unconscious superiority, Lina should have shown, as she might have done, that she was something more than a casual patroness showing some passing interest in a poor young dependant. Hans was all the more angry because he seemed to feel this failure as a flaw in a sweet and noble character. Sweet indeed, and unlike anything and any one in his limited experience. Lady Stella had been kindness itself, but with Lina there had been this understanding sympathy — he scarce knew what name to give the feeling — and for her to turn away in that grand-lady manner had pained him and wounded him beyond expression.

His mother blessed him as she said "Good-night." "There is no one, like my Hans," she said proudly, and looking at him with wistful eyes, "Hans, I am not the only person who thinks so, my dear."

Hans turned away abruptly. He went up to his room, and for hours the widow heard him pacing over-head until she fell asleep. "Hush !" said the night. Hans leant his head upon his hands, and stretched out from the open lattice ; under the faint light of the stars that seemed raining from heaven, lay the woods, the dusky roofs, and all dim outlines, confused, indistinct, asleep. As he pressed his hand against his head, he tried with an effort to calm the rush of the torrent of life, that seemed only the more vivid for the silent mystery all round.

Lady Stella said nothing of Lina's visit to the farm, and Lina herself offered no explanation. Lady Stella was a discreet woman. She had that gift of considerate silence which belongs to people of a certain world, who have almost inherited

the tradition. Discretion is not reserve : Lina was reserved, but not discreet. She could only open her heart in sudden impulses and pour it forth in a passionate cadence. She could not sing Lady Stella's sweet and gentle song. But then all Lady Stella's life was gentle : she had no lonely hours, no dark suspicions to poison her trust, no bitter reserves with those she loved.

#### XIV.

POOR Lina ! After that moonlight, sunshine came to make all things cruelly distinct ; to scare away the sweetest dreams ; to light up dull facts, monotonous habits, disappointment, people at play, people at work, common sense on the face of things — the Gorges' crest on the panel of the great carriage as it rolled up the lane. How sensible it seemed, with all that it entailed — that hideous dragon's head to which Lina was expected to sacrifice her poor little life without a moment's doubt or hesitation ! Lina could ill stand the doubts of those she loved. She was constant, but not faithful by nature ; she could ill hold her own against the tacit will of those she loved ; she made no effort to see Hans again, but her confidence seemed to droop with her spirits ; and though she scarcely owned it to herself, she longed to hear of him again. Once, with a secret trepidation, she had announced her intention of walking down to the farm ; why should she not go ? she asked herself.

"My dear," said Lady Gorges, taking her aside, "you must not think of it ; your papa would be so displeased."

This must be at Stella's suggestion, thought the girl. For a time she was very angry with Stella ; but how was it possible to keep up a coldness with any one so sweet ? — only the girl's confidence seemed to droop away little by little.

And indeed Sir George could not hear Hans' name mentioned without fierce volleys of abuse. Day by day his temper became fiercer, his humours more unbearable. Lina said nothing ; her one language was to grow more silent ; she seemed to fade and fade in her corner. If only she could have heard them mention Hans' name sometimes, she would have minded it less ; but neither Harold nor Stella ever spoke of him now ; and one day when Lina was driving with her brother Harold, and met him in the lane and would have stopped, Harold urged on

the pony, taking the reins from her hands.

"Harold, why wouldn't you stop?" said Lina, almost in a passion.

"I am in a hurry, dear," said Harold weakly, confused. "I have a christening at three o'clock—and there are reasons;" but she could not make up her mind to question her brother. Lina used to ask herself what she had done—where her crime had been?

The truth was, there had been odd rumours in the village. Lady Stella might be discreet, but Mrs. Lefevre could not help speaking to Mrs. Plaskett of Lina's visit; Mrs. Plaskett had repeated the story with many fanciful additions, and some version of it had come to the Rector. He and his wife were in terror lest it should reach the Hall. Lina must not hear of it, they decided, and all intercourse with the farm must cease. And to spare one pang, as people do, they inflicted another still worse. People talked, as people talk, without much meaning; for a long time they discussed the lease so strangely restored. Hans, installed on his father's domain, became a man of note in the parish. Harold called to see him one day, and to offer compensation for the land upon which his own house was standing. This land-rent came out of the young man's private resources, and was somewhat of a tax, but he did not grudge it. Mr. Gorges found the young farmer; he was full of a scheme for a joint-stock farming company; his own labourers were to have shares in it, and he had engaged a manager for a time, while he himself went off to Agricultural College to study the business more thoroughly.

"You will be giving up your paper," said Harold Gorges, not without some secret relief.

"I am only going for a few months," said Hans. "I hope to keep my hand in at the office, and to be home again before the elections."

Harold looked rather uncomfortable. His brother Jasper was coming forward; he was very doubtful as to what his reception might be; and a vision of future *Excelsiors* came before him.

All this silent suppression was a mistake as far as Lina was concerned; she was unhappy, and brooding, while Hans was working and interested, and angry perhaps; but anger is far less wearisome than passive regret. The farm had thrown out fresh gables; the garden was trimmed and blooming. His carts were

rolling along the lane; Mrs. Lefevre, in a nice black dress, would sit sewing in the garden. One day Hans was standing beside her, and he took off his hat as his mother kissed her hand audaciously to Lina, and the girl bent her head in answer. Jasper Gorges, who had come home, and who was riding alongside of the carriage, was furious.

"How can you encourage such impertinence?" he said, cantering up. "That low ploughman!"

Lina coloured up: "Why do you speak of Mr. Lefevre in that way, Jasper; what wrong has he done you?"

"Remember that I have heard more than you seem to imagine," said Jasper savagely. "He is at the bottom of everything. I believe him to have organized this attack upon my father. Do you know that they have already contrived to get Mr. Kewsy to come down from London to defend that fellow Bridges? If it wasn't for the election I would give them my mind," said Jasper, in his father's own tones, cutting at his poor little mare.

Jasper was quite right in one of his surmises. It was Hans who had spirited up the Reds and Greens to apply to Mr. Kewsy, and to organize the Bridges Defence Committee. Young as he was, he had that peculiar art of leadership which is so hard to define: that gift of personal influence and persuasion. His sleepy eyes seemed to open wide, his courage to rise; a something that would have been called heroic in past times, seemed to carry other minds with his own. Mr. Kewsy himself was very much interested by the modest and handsome young fellow, and when that learned counsel appeared in court, strong in heart and clear in his merciless logic, Sir George's summons was dismissed, and Bridges came off with flying colours.

That winter was very severe: the cold nipped people's hearts; aches and pains seemed borne down by the heavy iron clouds; trees shivered and shook their frozen wings in the blast. Birds were found lying dead under the hedges, and the price of provisions and of coals rose higher than had been known for years. In the spring, warmth, and light, and ease returned, but the prices were still excessive. Some landlords—the Duke among them—had raised their wages. Jasper Gorges, who was a shrewd man, told his father that he had been looking into the matter, and that before long it would be necessary for him to do so too.



"We must remember the election," said Jasper.

"What do they want with more wages?" growled Sir George. "It is that — *Excelsior* putting us to all this expense. That — paper is at the bottom of it all."

The *Excelsior* still held its place, and now and then published articles that were really remarkable in their way — clearly conceived, simply expressed; others were sheer clap-trap, and Hans blushed as he read them. But he worked away with all his might at his own work, and from time to time sent articles from the College, and once or twice he came home to see his mother. Hans believed in his cause and his organ, though now and then chance expressions that Butcher let drop struck him oddly. But he was too single hearted to suspect others of motives different from his own.

When Hans came back from the self-imposed course that he had undertaken, he was well satisfied with the condition of things in the home farm, but he thought there was a change in Tom Parker and Butcher. They welcomed him gladly, and made him as much at home as ever; but they seemed to have been preoccupied with personalities, private discussions, and vague schemes for putting this man and that man into this place and that place, in all of which the *Excelsior* took part; but with which Hans himself could not sympathize with much cordiality.

One day Hans had a somewhat unpleasant discussion with Butcher in the office, where he had gone to write a leader. He had come in in the middle of a conversation between Butcher and Parker, who was in his shirt-sleeves superintending the men.

"We can't afford to have him popular — never do for us. They say Jasper Gorges has not such a bad chance, after all. He is a clever fellow, and knows which way his bread is buttered."

"What is it all about?" asked Hans.

"Oh!" said Butcher, "the old Ogre wants to raise his wages. He might get popular, you know — never do for us."

"Look here, Tom," said Butcher, with a grin. "I know how to stop it at once. We'll recommend him to do it, in a rattling leader."

"But why shouldn't he raise his wages?" said Hans. "And why stop it? What is it to us whether Jasper Gorges or Lord Henry gets in for the county? I don't suppose it will make

much difference to any one of us in the long run."

"Look here," said Butcher, and he pointed to a paragraph in the *Excelsior*.

"We understand that Lord Henry Cropland, the second son of the Duke of Farmington, is about to issue an address to the electors of Hillford and Hayhurst on the occasion of the forthcoming election. His lordship, it will be remembered, has very lately come to reside among us, having retired from the navy, where he has seen much service. He is a staunch Liberal. Mr. Gorges, the eldest son of Sir George Gorges, of Stoney-moor Court, has, it is rumoured, also announced his intention of coming forward as the Conservative candidate. Mr. Gorges has already tried, on more than one occasion, to gain a seat in Parliament. We are also authorized to state that the workmen of Hillford have unanimously determined that the time has now come to put forward a representative of their own order."

"Will Bridges come forward?" said Hans, eagerly.

"We are going to try for him," said Butcher, with a look at Tom Parker.

"And if you can't get Bridges?" said Hans.

"Well, there is you and me and Tom here," said Butcher, slowly. Hans coloured up, and they were all three silent for a minute.

Before he left, Hans resumed the wages discussion.

Butcher did not like being opposed, and answered sharply, that this was not the time to move for higher wages: it would do positive harm instead of good. Wait till the harvest time — that was the time to strike.

"I don't at all agree with you," said Hans, hotly; "it's a shabby trick;" and if Tom Parker had not interfered, there would have been a quarrel.

As Hans left the office, he almost ran up against Sir George, who was walking in, and who scowled at him as usual. Sir George was followed by Jasper, who bowed politely as he passed; but Hans thought he preferred the father's open scowl.

#### XV.

AND meanwhile Mrs. Lefevre basked in her son's presence again. To hear him come and go was perfect felicity after his long absence. For years past she had not been so free from care. Hans was not idle all that week: he

went into his own affairs and into his neighbours'; he went from cottage to cottage; he cross-questioned a whole parish of agricultural labourers, and at the end of the time he made up his mind that the rise in wages was an absolute necessity. His own labourers were few in number, but their interest was safe; "and if Butcher threatens or frightens or talks Sir George out of his good intentions, I'll never write another line for the *Excelsior*," said Hans to his mother. "This is the time to ask for an advance. I hate that plan of waiting till the crops are ready to be gathered. They tell me there were acres of wheat spoilt last summer by the strike of the reapers. I can't understand such a man as Bridges countenancing such a beggarly scheme."

"Where are you going to now, dear?" said his mother, as Hans turned to leave the room.

"I will tell you later," said Hans, as he kissed his mother before he went away.

Then he came back. "I am going to the Hall," he said; "I had better beard the old fellow in his den."

Mrs. Lefevre looked hard at him. "I am glad you are going, dear," she said. Something seemed to have opened her heart. She no longer worried and complained of his ways as she used to do. She could not love him more than she had ever loved him; but she spoke her love in other words. Things come right as they go wrong, one can scarce tell how.

## XVI.

MRS. LEFEVRE going out into the garden some two hours later to look at her beehives, found to her surprise that Hans was come back. He was sitting on the bench by the great walnut-tree. His hands were in his pockets, his long legs were stretched out upon the grass, and he was looking straight before him, staring at a great city of growing hollyhocks, of which the spires and minarets were aflame in the slanting light. Hans did not move until his mother came up to him, but as she laid her hand caressingly upon his shoulder, he looked up in her face with a very sweet expression.

"Well, dear," she said, "have you seen Sir George?"

"I have seen him," Hans answered; "and I have seen *her*," he said, in some agitation. "Mother, how ill she looks! Do you think she will — she will die? I met her in the hall as I was coming

away. She called me back — she —. Oh, mother!" said Hans, suddenly throwing his arms round his mother's waist, and hiding his face for a moment against her, "I can't believe it, I can't believe it."

Emelyn's own heart was beating as tumultuously as her son's almost. She understood all that he would have said, as she had guessed at poor Lina's unconscious secret long before. "Hans, darling, what did she say?" she cried excitedly. "I knew it all along; I knew that she loved you that day when she came here. Oh, my dear, my dear, how could she help loving you?" said Mrs. Lefevre, melting utterly.

"Hush, dear," said Hans.

"Did you see Sir George?" Mrs. Lefevre asked. She was trembling, and sat down beside him on the bench.

"Yes; they showed me into the drawing-room, by mistake for the pantry, I suppose," said Hans. "They were all drinking tea; Mr. Crockett was there with a pair of sugar-tongs, and Sir George. *She* looked up, poor darling, with her sweet face, but Lady Gorges rushed in between us, and then Sir George took me away. I don't know where — behind a door-way, I think."

"And how did he behave?" said Mrs. Lefevre.

"He was wonderfully civil; and to my amazement he proposed at once to sign the landlords' agreement to a rise of wages; he said he had heard of it, and that he had been wanting to speak to me on the subject. He talked a great deal of nonsense about the elections, and then —" Hans stopped.

"And then what?" said his mother.

"And then he suddenly said he was very glad to hear that the agricultural interest was likely to be so fairly represented," Hans continued, blushing; "and that although Mr. Bridges could not stand, he strongly recommended me to agree to Butcher's suggestion, and to come forward as popular candidate."

"*You!*" said Mrs. Lefevre, in utter amazement and consternation. "*You, Hans?*"

Hans looked a little conscious. "I thought he was half tipsy at the time," said the young man, dryly; "but look here, mother: I met Tom Parker, who was bringing this up."

"*This*" was a telegram from Butcher: "Bridges refuses to come forward. H. L. has the qualification. Tell him to trust to us. *Excelsior* shall bring him in."

"Parker showed me this, and said they would share the expenses," said Hans, looking his mother hard in the face with an odd expression.

"My dearest Hans," cried Mrs. Lefevre, "what does this mean? I can hardly take it all in! Should you know how to do it? Could you afford it? Oh! my dear, dear boy, be careful."

"I'm careful enough," said Hans quietly. "You needn't excite yourself, mother—it is only an electioneering trick;" and he crumpled the paper up, and put it in his pocket again, and sighed. "People don't have roast quails dropping into their mouths now-a-days."

"Why should you call it a trick?" said Mrs. Lefevre, disappointed by his calmness. "What greater honour could be done you at your age? I can hardly believe it. Oh, if your father were but here to see this day!" and Emelyn flushed up, and was becoming somewhat hysterically oratorical.

But Hans stopped her. He put his hand on hers: "Listen, mother," he said; "it's all a bubble. *She* warned me—I told you she came running after me," he said. "I heard her dear voice calling me as I came away. I was to take care—she did not understand, but she knew that Mr. Butcher had planned something against me. It was something to bring Jasper in. Jasper was to give the money, she said, and I was to spoil Lord Henry's election. She said she had heard them talking on the terrace. Then she took my hand—and oh, mother, she burst out crying, and said she could bear this cold estrangement no longer—that she did not forget—she could not bear it."

"And then?" said Mrs. Lefevre.

"And then Jasper himself came into the hall with Lady Stella," said Hans, with a bitter sort of laugh, "and he would have liked to turn me out of the house: but I can stand my ground, you know—it was a painful scene enough. At all events the wages are safe," he said, with another great sigh, "and Sir George has signed the landlords' agreement."

Mrs. Lefevre was not thinking of wages; she was looking at her son with vague, dreamy eyes. "Hans, you ought to go back," she said, suddenly. "You won't leave her all alone to bear the brunt of their anger? Hans, dear, do you love her? She might be a happy woman if you do. Listen, dearest: she might come here, where I have been so happy and so unhappy," said Emelyn, with her two hands on her tall boy's shoulders and

looking tenderly and wistfully into his face.

He was quite pale. He looked at her very steadily, with dilating eyes.

"Do you mean it?" he said. "I too, mother, have been thinking something of the sort. She will die if she stops up there. Her hands are quite thin and transparent. Do I love her?—with all my heart and soul I love her."

#### XVII.

THEY had dined early at Stoney Moor that evening. Lady Stella had gone home very sad at heart. Jasper, who suspected Lina, had behaved very cruelly; sneered at her, and taunted her mercilessly. Lina had borne it all passively, and scarcely seemed to hear; Lady Gorges had sat in her best feathered dinner-cap, with tears slowly flowing down her cheeks; Sir George had sworn, and growled, and d—d, but even he had thought that Jasper went too far in his anger against his sister, and once he took her part: "Jasper, what are you worrying on about? Eat your dinner, can't you? These marrow-bones are excellent." This was too much for the poor girl: she had borne the unkindness in stolid silence—at her father's first word of kindness she burst into tears, and ran out of the room. After dinner he had called her back to play to him.

Lina was sitting on the step of the terrace. The dining-room window was open, and Sir George was snoring in his easy-chair. Lady Gorges had retired to her room, and Jasper had been summoned to Hillford to talk matters over with his agent. He had not heard what Lina said to Hans, but he shrewdly guessed that she had given him some warning, and hence his rage against her. Lina cared not for his anger at that moment: there she sat in a bronze shadow, leaning her head against one of the stone pilasters. As the gold streamed westward some solemn vapours were massed in purple and splendour beyond the trees and flower-beds. Every leaf, every flower was bathed in light, and from her shadowy corner Lina watched it all; but this hour was not for her. She was thinking over what had happened, shivering with shame at the thought of her own boldness, and crying out in her heart at the injustice of her fate. To Jasper, Lina said nothing, but she had turned furiously upon Lady Stella that day before she left. "It is easy for you," she had said to Stella:

"you may speak and be yourself, and love Harold and not be ashamed. But I! what have I done, what have I said that you and Jasper are so cruel to me? Mama looks pleased enough if I speak civilly to Mr. Crockett: she would be enchanted if I took the smallest interest in his affairs, or cared one sixpence for his opinion; and here is a man who is cleverer and braver, and a thousand times better than he, and whom I respect with all my heart, and whom we have wronged most cruelly. If I even speak to him, you are all up in arms; and if I feel grateful for his kindness and help—and you don't know what that has been—you cry out and say it is a shame and a degradation. It seems to me that it is we who are degraded," said Lina, with a burst of tears, "when we are grasping and ungrateful, when we set vanity and worldliness and good investments above everything else in life."

Stella hardly knew Lina as she stood quivering and passionate before her: the girl looked transformed, beautiful, vehement, and Lady Stella looked at her hard with her clear thoughtful eyes. A vision rose before her of Mr. Crockett, amiable, weak-eyed, feebly admiring, and of young Hans Lefevre as he had looked when he walked in among them that day, simple and erect, with his honest eagle face and the grand seigneur manner of people who have not lived in the world, but who instinctively hold their own among other men and women, and then Lady Stella took Lina's hand and kissed it. She could not say anything to her, for in her own kind heart of hearts she felt that the girl had a right to cry out against that strange superstition which condemned her. Stella being gone, Lina's burst of indignation over, the reaction having set in, she sat as I have said—shivering at the thought of her own bold speech. Had she saved Hans from any dangerous step? that at least she need not regret; for did she not owe thus much to him and to her friendship? and in all her perplexed regret it was peace to have seen him again—to have spoken her mind, not to a stranger, but to a friend. It was a sort of farewell, thought Lina, to the might-have-been that would never be hers. Good-by, said her heart; you have sown no grain, you can reap no harvest in life. There is no happiness anywhere, but perhaps there may be some work and a little courage to do it; and then came the old refrain.

"My poor papa, my poor papa," sighed Lina, looking in through the open window at the sleeping man, "I have been false to you, and to my friend and to myself, and yet I meant to be true;" and she hid her pale face in her hands. The sunset had spread by this time, and Lina's golden hair was burning in a sort of sunset aureole, lighting that shadowy corner. She heard a step fall on the stones, and looking round with her tear-dimmed face she saw Hans standing erect in the full blaze of light, smiling and undismayed.

"You here?" she cried, faltering. "Oh, why have you come?" and she started up half frightened, and held out her hand, saying, "Go. Papa is there; he will hear you."

But Hans did not move, and stood holding her hand. "Don't you know why I have come back?" he said.

The sight of her tears gave him strange courage. "I have come back because I could not keep away. And now that I am here you *must* know that I love you."

"Oh, no, no!" said poor Lina, passionately; "this is the last time; the last time."

"Listen," he said, with some decision; "I must speak now. Can't you love me better than all these things which do not make you happy? I love you well enough not to be afraid that you will ever regret them."

What a strange love-making was this, flashing into the last sunset minutes of this dying day—love-making to the sinking of the sun, in its burning lights, its sumptuous glooms and sombre flashes! The distant lights seemed to call to her, his voice and looks seemed to call, and for one instant Hans' arm was round her, and she did not move or speak—only her eyes spoke.

Jack of the Bean-stalk carried his precious golden harp boldly away, notwithstanding its piteous outcries. There is a picture of him wielding his prize in one hand, and warding off the giant with the other. To-night it was no giant awakening—but an old man still asleep in an arm-chair by the window—and, for all his cruelty and harshness, Lina was the only person he loved: how could she forget it? "Yes, I do love you," she said; "but I can't—I can't leave him so. Don't ask it—oh, don't ask it. Papa! papa!" she called, in a shrill, pitiful voice, suddenly clasping Hans in her arms.

Then Sir George, hearing his daugh-

ter's voice, woke up, and in his stupid, half-tipsy sleep, he started from his chair, and came staggering out into the garden, and as he came, his foot caught in some mat in the window, and with one more oath he fell, with a heavy thud, upon the ground, where he lay senseless. His daughter shrieked, and ran to help him. Hans helped her to raise him from the ground. "I had better go for a doctor," he said, for he saw the case was serious.

The frightened servants coming in presently, found Miss Gorges alone, kneeling on the ground, and trying to staunch the blood that was flowing from the wound in her father's head.

#### XVIII.

HE rallied a little, but the Baronet was never himself again. The shock brought on paralysis, which had long been impending, and he died within a year. This paralysis may (as doctors will tell us) perhaps have been the secret of his mad furies and ravings. During his illness the story of the negotiation with Butcher came out, and cost Jasper his election. Tom Parker disclosed the transaction. The Duke and his son Lord Henry were indignant beyond words. "It was a shabby plot; the Gorges tried to get up a Radical diversion, and were to pay half the expenses," Lord Henry told every one. "Bridges suspected the whole affair, and refused to have anything to do with it, and so did young Lefevre, whom they tried to bring forward. He is a very fine fellow," said Lord Henry, who could afford to be generous; "I hear he has cut the whole concern since then."

"But they tell me he is engaged to Miss Gorges," said the Duchess. "It seems a strange affair altogether."

When the Baronet died, it was found that he had not signed his will. Lady Gorges took her jointure, Lina only received her great-aunt's inheritance; it was little enough, but it came in conveniently for her housekeeping when the "strange affair" came off. There was no strangeness for Lina on the day when Hans brought her home. After her father's death she wrote to him and he came and fetched her away. For the first time in her life Lina felt satisfied and at peace. Not the less that sweet Lady Stella's fears were over, and she had only brightest sympathies to give. Lady Gorges had no opinion on the subject; now that Sir George was dead, she subsided utterly, and agreed with every-

thing and everybody. Mrs. Lefevre lived in one wing of the house, and spoilt her grandchildren. Hans rose in the world: his joint farming company flourished, and his writings became widely known, and one day his name appeared at the head of the Hillford poll, and the Radical member was returned at last. Then Emelyn felt that in some mysterious way an answer had come to the problems of her own life. She had failed, but she had lived, and here was her son who had done some good works, and who seemed in some measure to be the answer to her vague prayers for better things. She had scarcely known what she wanted, but whatever it was, her life had unconsciously influenced this one man towards right-doing; and there are few women who would not feel with Emelyn Lefevre, that in their children's well-doing and success there is a blessing and a happiness even beyond the completeness of one single experience.

From Temple Bar.

#### MADAME DU BARRY, AND THE LAST YEARS OF LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MIRABEAU," &c.

FROM the time of Louis the Fourteenth the corruptions of the higher stratum of society had been slowly filtering to the lower. We have seen in a previous article how great was the impetus given by the Mississippi Scheme to the blending and confounding of ranks.\* Arriving at the middle of the eighteenth century, we see the richer *bourgeois* running the race of vice with the fine gentleman. The grave citizen, dressed in his sober black or grey, punctual in the exercise of his religious duties, faithful husband, severe father, has been succeeded by a flippant son, flaunting in ribbons, who has his *loge à l'opéra* and his *fille d'opéra* and his *petite maison*, where he gives his *petits soupers* in imitation of more aristocratic *roués*. Among all classes marriage is becoming a byword and a jest; as the husbands have their mistresses, so the wives have their lovers. Drunkenness and gormandizing are universal. Art and literature are all sensual. The classic stage is neglected for the ballet and the Italian theatre, in the *arlequins*,

\* It is almost impossible to over-estimate the significance and importance of that movement in its effects upon the French society of the eighteenth century. It was the first germ of the great Revolution.



*colombines, scaramouches, polichinelles, pantalons* of which the spectators behold a burlesque reflection of themselves and their lives.

From the condition of mere pensionaries and servants of the royal household, which they held under Louis the Fourteenth, men of letters rose under his successor to be the equals of the aristocracy, the associates of kings. From servitors they became masters. In one age they were admitted to society on sufferance, in the next they swayed it; to be a poet or satirist was to be greater than a successful general or a great diplomatist; the rumour of a new play by Voltaire excited more interest than the news of an approaching battle. Thus the destructive literature of the eighteenth century was fostered by that class whom its doctrines would destroy. The *noblesse* went into ecstasies over Voltaire's "Brutus" and "Mort de César," and every fine lady and gentleman was for a time a sympathizer with regicide and republicanism.

Diderot and D'Alembert were petted by the great, whom their pens were ever stabbing; and even wild republican Jean-Jacques, whose every book was a battering-ram hurled against the foundations of society, was courted and caressed by those whose very existence he made it his mission to denounce.

There is something startling, almost appalling, in the moth-like insensibility to danger manifested by those fools of fortune. It would seem as though, weary of seething in their own corruption, they eagerly longed for a new order of things, even though it should bring about their own annihilation. The old *régime* was so rotten, so utterly effete, that its component parts could no longer cohere; and so they crumbled and dropped into the resistless flood that was whelming the old world of thought, and were hurried on to the brink of the gulf, dashed into its surging, boiling depths, and buried in the fathomless ocean of eternity, never to rise again.

The poetry of the age of Louis the Fifteenth still retained many of the characteristics of that of the Regency. As a French writer remarks, "it was not Christian, but heathen; poets spoke the heathen language of Tibullus, Catullus, Propertius, Ovid. Voltaire, Dorat, St.-Lambert, Marmontel, Gentil-Bernard, were mere echoes of the Greek and the Roman; all alike breathed sensualism." But the literature of the Regency was

inert; its writers cared nothing for proselytizing; they wrote for the coteries, for fine ladies and gentlemen, for Epicurean philosophers: that is to say, for their patrons or their equals; the *bourgeois*, the artisan, belonged to another world, with which they had no sympathy. But towards the middle of the eighteenth century there began to arise a more universal literature, a literature that appealed to all: a literature of propagandism whose utterances went not forth from gilded *salons*, but from garret and cottage; from men whose sympathies were with the masses from which they had sprung; whose object was to emancipate the human mind from the tyranny of tradition. Such men were Diderot, D'Alembert, and above all Rousseau. "To dissipate prejudice, to annihilate error, to enlighten the human race, and to render truth triumphant:" this was the motto of the Encyclopédistes.

The eighteenth century opened with doubt and closed with atheism. Descartes, Leibnitz, Fréret, Fourmont, Montesquieu, were succeeded by Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire, Rousseau. The cleansing waters of the Reformation, unhappily for her, were damned back, and flowed into France only in little streamlets, that produced a scarcely perceptible effect upon the land, and so it was still cumbered by the rottenness of an effete religious system.\* For centuries the dissolute and anomalous lives of the clergy had been patent to all men. Chaucer, Rabelais, and scores of minor writers had mercilessly satirized them. But the human mind, fettered by antique custom and superstitions, still looked upon the man and the creed as indivisible, as they probably were in the blind mechanical faith of the age. Except in times of wild commotion, like the Fronde, when every bond, social and religious, was broken, the clergy had made at least a pretence to sanctimony, to a belief in the dogmas they preached, although even under the stern rule of Louis the Fourteenth

Their best conscience

Was, not to leave undone, but keep unknown.

It was reserved, however, for the eighteenth century to show to the world the monstrous prodigy of a clergy living in open profligacy, frequenters of brothels,

\* I do not intend by this sentence to cast an insult upon the *doctrines* of the Catholic faith; not with the polemical, but with the social effects of that movement has this article to do.

companions of courtesans, rivals of the most abandoned *roués*; of a blaspheming clergy who ridiculed their religion and their God, until an *abbé*, before a full assemblage of the Sorbonne, sustained a thesis that the revelation of Moses was a lie and Christ almost a hypothesis! In opposition to those were the bigoted supporters of the bull "Unigenitus," who thrust out of the pale of the church and consigned to eternal perdition all who did not conform within the narrowest limits of dogmatic belief; men who would fain have repressed all liberty of thought with fire, and sword, and torture. Such was the church of the age: half atheism, half bigotry, and no Christianity. The people were distracted between belief and unbelief, between agonizing doubts concerning the souls of those to whom the bull had denied salvation and a hatred of all religion. In the midst of these dissensions the first number of the "Encyclopédie" appeared. Men hailed it as a new revelation, its writers as the liberators of human thought, liberators who had stepped forth to strike the chains of bigotry and superstition from off their souls and exorcise the demons of supernatural terror. Who can wonder that these formula-sickened wretches, in whose eyes Christianity was a mere cloak to hide priestly vices, a mass of dry bones, of lying relics, should leap into the arms of Scepticism, in whose bosom, blank and dreary as it might be, there was at least no hell fire? To the powerful pens of D'Alembert and Diderot was added the leviathan one of Voltaire. The Jesuits, of whom these men were pupils, at once waged war against this new birth of thought; the "Encyclopédie" was suppressed; the people regarded its writers as martyrs to their cause, and disciples daily increased. The "Encyclopédie," spite of royal and priestly prohibition, continued to be written, to be printed, and to be surreptitiously published. Caution and fear of consequences had at first restrained its freedom of expression within certain bounds; prohibition rendered such caution useless, and so its pages henceforth breathed materialism *pur et simple*. The most powerful of this school of sceptics in social position were Helvétius and the Baron d'Holbach, in whose splendid salons, and about whose luxurious tables, loaded with all that could charm the senses, gathered all the philosophers and wits of Paris. Among this coterie of materialists, the object of whose lives

was the subversion of Christianity, Voltaire, that scapegoat of vulgar prejudice, was, perhaps, the most reverent. Priesthoods of all creeds and nations were his abhorrence, and it must be confessed that although he was a bitter opponent to revealed religion no man believed more profoundly in the existence of a Deity. There was one, who occasionally mingled with this society, a shy, sensitive, solitary, half-crazed being, and yet the greatest genius of them all; this man was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the prophet and law-giver of the Revolution. Voltaire, who wrote so glibly upon equality and liberty, and who was ever denouncing the false, the artificial and traditional, was himself an aristocrat in ideas, and the most artificial and traditional of writers and thinkers; he was an imitator of Greece and Rome, a large portion of his phraseology is a jargon of classical allusions; he could not write a little poem, or even a letter, without filling it with the personages and stories of the heathen mythology. It was certainly the jargon of the age; but the man who writes in the same style as his contemporaries cannot be called original. His irony and satire are keen, brilliant, polished, but cold as steel; it is the satire of a scholar and a sceptic; it was inspired at *petits soupers*, composed in gilded drawing-rooms; like the heroes of his plays, it smacks of powdered hair and red-heeled shoes; it was written for the delight of fine gentlemen and philosophers, and one must be something of a fine gentleman or a philosopher to relish it. It might dispose men to sneer and speculate, and enunciate infidel theories over their wine, but scarcely to rush forth with fire and sword as propagandists of a new gospel; it lacks the subtle flame that fires the souls of half-educated enthusiasts — the men who are the creators of revolutions. Voltaire is never intensely in earnest. In all these elements Rousseau is his opposite. He follows no model of defunct antiquity, speaks in no jargon of extinct creeds; he disdainfully casts aside *all* tradition, all laws, social, political, and dogmatic; all to him are alike false, artificial, oppressive, and infamous; he strips man of every attribute of civilization, of all that he has learned since the day of Adam, nay, of every rag of artificial clothing, and makes him stand forth once more the naked savage. "Here," he cries, "is the primitive model. If you would be happy, if you would be virtuous, cast off this huge mass of vice and misery you name civilization, the

burden of which grows heavier with every century; acknowledge no laws but those of Nature; let the forest, canopied by the blue profound, be your temple, the hills your altars; let no priest stand between you and the great Spirit; seek no protection beyond your good right arm; seek no man's help to clothe or feed you, be wholly self-reliant; love as your heart dictates, untrammelled by irksome fetters." Think of these doctrines as clothed in the fervid language of intense conviction, saturated with the passionate, the mad enthusiasm, that filled the soul of this extraordinary man, falling upon the jaded ears of a corrupt, effete, moribund society, that almost longed for its own dissolution. They fired the souls of visionary dreamers with Utopian hopes; to the impoverished man of gentle birth, reduced by his own or his forefathers' extravagance to be a mere tiller of the soil,\* whose galled pride hated his own order, they promised regeneration; to the poor ambitious scholar, to the struggling man of liberal profession, stung by the sense of mean birth chafing against the restrictions of caste, they opened a prospect of power, a hope of revenge against the order that despised him. The heart of every man who was low and desired to be high leaped towards the preacher whose text was "ALL MEN ARE EQUAL!" Most enticing and delusive of cries! Dim echoes of this new gospel penetrated even into the foul alleys of the great cities and into the squalid cabins of the peasantry, where hunger, pestilence, and death held their court. Infected by the spirit of such a creed, they longed to free their limbs from the fetters that had eaten into and rusted in their flesh for ages; they gasped for one breath of liberty. Year by year this feeling intensified until it became delirium, until it chanted the Marseillaise, danced the *carmagnole*, and erected the guillotine. Yes, Rousseau was indeed the "Evangelist" of the Revolution.

With this brief and imperfect sketch of the state of society during the latter half of the eighteenth century, I will proceed to give some account of the

career of a woman who may be regarded as a type of the age in which she lived.

The village of Vaucouleurs is remarkable as being the birthplace of two of the most famous, or should I say one of the most famous and one of the most infamous?—women of French history—Joan of Arc and the Countess du Barry. It has been suggested that Vaucouleurs is not entitled to this latter honour, or *dishonour*, but that it has been so accredited from the love of antithesis so common among the French, and for the purpose of more strikingly contrasting two strikingly opposite characters. Be that as it may, Marie-Jeanne Aimard de Vaubernier was born in the year 1746. Writers differ as to the condition of her parents, but it is probable that she was the daughter of a mantua-maker named Becu and of one Vaubernier, a man of good but poor family.

She was only eight years of age when her father died; his income had never been more than a bare subsistence, and the child and her mother were left totally unprovided for. There were only two persons in the wide world to whom they could turn for assistance: a poor monk named l'Ange, M. de Vaubernier's brother, and M. Billaud de Monceau, Jeanne's godfather, a financier, a rich and benevolent man. Both resided in Paris, so to Paris widow and orphan went.

Père l'Ange was too poor to afford them any substantial assistance, but he waited upon M. de Monceau and represented their condition. These good offices resulted in the child being sent to a convent to be educated and in a situation being procured for the mother. At sixteen Jeanne was apprenticed to a *modiste* named Labille. Numerous stories of intrigues and love adventures are related of this epoch of her life in the apocryphal memoirs which have at different periods passed for genuine biographies; but as their authenticity is extremely doubtful I shall not repeat any of them. There can be little doubt but that the girl's early life was far from immaculate; as indeed what life was, in that age of universal moral corruption?

We next find her a companion to a rich widow named La Garde, whose two sons fall in love with her; she encourages the addresses of both without favouring either; by-and-by the mother discovers what is going on and Jeanne is expelled the house. Her next step is into the brilliant but depraved society of the *demi-monde*. She is now a frequenter

\* The enormous cost entailed by Court life and the bursting of the Mississippi bubble had reduced hundreds to this condition; and, during the latter half of the eighteenth century it was common to see the sons, and even the daughters, of men of ancient lineage, working in the fields of some small farm, the last remnant left to them of their ancient patrimony. Among these the doctrines of the Revolution found some of its most ardent advocates.

of the *salons* of the sisters Verrières and of Guimard the dancer, gambling houses and something worse, the rendezvous of all the great lords and financiers. At Guimard's the Prince de Soubise did the honours. Those vast drawing-rooms, the most gorgeous and brilliant of the capital, displayed a luxury more than Oriental. Guimard was the Ninon l'Enclos of the eighteenth century; her assemblies embraced all the wit and fashion of the age. Around the apartments were constructed boxes closely curtained, resembling those of a theatre; they were for the accommodation of certain great ladies, who, while still preserving some respect for appearances, could thus enjoy the contemplation of the dazzling scene without being visible to the general eye.

Among the frequenters of these *salons* was the Count Jean du Barry, a man of high family but a gambler and a *roué*. Struck by the beauty of Mdle. Lange — Jeanne Vaubernier had now assumed her uncle's name — he offered her his "protection." It was accepted. This was the commencement of a new epoch in the life of our adventuress. By-and-by a grand idea enters the scheming brain of Count Jean; the post of favourite sultana has been vacant since the death of La Pompadour; what if Mdle. Lange could be raised to that dignity? With Count Jean to think is to act; the idea conceived, he immediately seeks about for the means of putting it into force. Not much difficulty in that. "The well-beloved" is always accessible to a pretty woman, and has besides plenty of panders and pimps about to lead the way to such an introduction. The young lady obtains an invitation to a royal *petit souper*, the King is enchanted with her beauty and graceful easy manners, and Count Jean's ambitious project becomes a brilliant success.

But previous to her mounting to the coveted dignity it was necessary that mademoiselle should go through a certain ceremony. As yet she was nameless and husbandless. A royal mistress untitled and unmarried had never been heard of; such a dereliction from precedent would shock Court morality. Count Jean would, under the circumstances, have been most willing to have undertaken the *rôle* of husband, but unfortunately he had a wife living. He did, however, the next best thing to marrying her himself, he married her to his brother, Count Guillaume du Barry, a poor of-

ficer of marines, who willingly availed himself of so profitable an offer.

In the library at Versailles is still preserved the curious contract of this marriage. It is dated the 23rd of July, 1768. It is too long to quote, but suffice it to say that it left Madame la Comtesse a perfectly free agent, uncontrolled by marital authority. On the 1st of September in the same year the marriage was celebrated in Paris. Count Guillaume returned to Toulouse, richer by a pension of 5000 livres a year, the Court proprieties were satisfied, and the Countess was permanently established as *une reine de la gauche*.

But not without a shower of scurrilous poems and pasquinades, and a determined opposition. The poems and pasquinades were by divers hands, Voltaire's among others; the opposition came from the De Choiseul party. The secret of the hatred of the Duke de Choiseul to Madame du Barry was, that from the time of the death of the Marquise de Pompadour he had been plotting — *O tempora! O mores!* — to thrust his sister, the Countess de Grammont, a lady by no means in her first youth, into the vacant place. The malice of both brother and sister knew no bounds upon beholding the prize snatched from them by a mere low-born adventuress.

The Countess, however, had yet another ceremony to go through before she could be *acknowledged* as the King's mistress — she must be formally presented at Court. So powerful was the De Choiseul party, that some difficulty was at first experienced in finding a chaperon. This difficulty, however, was ultimately solved in the person of the Countess de Béarn, who undertook the doubtful task.

At Versailles there is a picture by Vanloo of a beautiful shepherdess with oval countenance, fine head, black eyes, and a mouth like a rose bud. It is the portrait of the Countess du Barry at the age of twenty-four, the period at which she was presented at Court. There is, besides, a picture by Greuze, "*La jeune fille à la cruche cassée*," for which she also sat. Most of that painter's heads are copies of this model.

The scene of the presentation is thus picturesquely described by Capefigue in his life of Madame du Barry:

All were on the *qui-vive* in the royal *château* on the evening of the 22nd of April, 1770, for all knew that the Countess du Barry was

about to be presented; the staunch partisans of the Duke de Choiseul affirmed that such a thing dared not be done, and, even supposing such an enormity were to be committed, how would she pass through the ordeal? She would be awkward and constrained. This conversation became the more lively and animated as the King was perceived to be uneasy and absent-minded while conversing with the Duke de Richelieu and the Prince de Soubise. As time passed on every one at Versailles began to think that the presentation would be delayed or indefinitely put off. But they were mistaken in the cause of the King's uneasiness. If he were impatient it was because he feared lest anything should have happened to the Countess. "Something has annoyed the hot-headed little puss," he said; "or perhaps she is sick. In any case I do not wish the presentation to be delayed beyond to-morrow." "Your Majesty's commands will be law to her," replied Richelieu.

In the midst of a whirl of conjectures the door opened and "Mesdames les Comtesses de Béarn et du Barry" were announced. The impression she created was immense; even the Countess's enemies confessed that never was more dazzling beauty combined with more grace and dignity. The success was complete. The King, enthusiastic, happy, raised the Countess, who, according to custom, knelt before him, uttering tender and gallant words in such a tone as to be heard by all. Mesdames the King's daughters, who were said to be so hostile to the presentation of the du Barry, welcomed her with much cordiality. As she made a very low reverence Mesdames raised her with much kindness and warmly embraced her. This flattering reception was acknowledged by the Countess with a respectful dignity which astonished the old *habitués* of the Court. Every one of De Choiseul's old courtiers said, "that far from taking her for the King's mistress she rather resembled a little boarding school girl who had come to make her first communion." This complete success suddenly changed the situation; the King was enabled to publicly avow his *penchant*, and the favour of a new sovereign lady had to be accepted by the courtiers.

From that time her position was duly recognized, and the milliner's apprentice was surrounded by great ladies, all eager to undertake the most menial offices about her person. The generosity of the King was as boundless as his infatuation, which perhaps exceeded all that he had felt for any one of his former mistresses. He bestowed upon her two annuities, one of 100,000 livres, another of 10,000 livres; the splendid estate of Louveciennes (or Luciennes), another at Nantes worth 40,000 livres a year, and many large sums of money besides.

The war between the De Choiseul and the Du Barry parties brought about some

vital political changes. De Choiseul, thoroughly impregnated with those ideas of constitutional government which Montesquieu had borrowed from England, and made familiar in France by his "*Esprit des Loix*," was a staunch *Parlementaire*. Madame du Barry allied herself with the party of Absolutism, and worked unceasingly for the destruction of the *Parlement*. Having won over to her side one of the enemy's officers, M. de Maupeou, a man who owed his position entirely to De Choiseul, she next set about corrupting the fidelity of a yet more important ally, M. de Voltaire.

No one had been more virulent against her, no one had heaped more degradation — in print — upon her head than he: witness "*Le Roi Pétard*;" nevertheless she wrote him a conciliating and gracious letter, to which he made a gracious and flattering reply. The reconciliation was complete. Henceforth M. de Voltaire was Madame du Barry's very humble servant, and undertook in his "*Histoire des Parlements*" to write down constitutional government. The fact is that Voltaire was weary of Ferney and exile, added to which he had a pique of long standing against the *Parlementaires*, whom he had already fought in defence of the Chevalier de la Barre and the still more celebrated Calas. Nor in writing in favour of Absolutism did he violate his natural predilections; for, although he, more than any other writer save Rousseau, was the author of the Revolution, no man of the age was more intensely aristocratic in ideas, no man more heartily despised the *canaille*. In one of his letters to a fellow-philosopher, he says: "I do not think we understand each other upon this article of the people, whom you believe to be so worthy of instruction. By the people I mean the populace, which has but its hands to live by. I doubt whether this order will ever have the time or the capacity to instruct itself. When the populace begin to reason all is lost." In deserting the cause of the Duc de Choiseul, who had ever been his firmest friend, and to whom every other writer stood staunch and true, Voltaire showed his usual ingratitude. The Duke's revenge for this desertion was a scathing one, at least so sensitive and irritable a temperament as was that of our philosopher; he had the renegade's likeness painted upon the vane at the top of his *château*.

Fostered by the favour of Madame de Pompadour and her favourite minister,



De Choiseul, who had so long governed France between them, the Parlementaires each year grew more powerful, turbulent and haughty. They were desirous of not only occupying a position analogous to that of the English House of Commons, but wished to constitute themselves into the sovereign tribunal of justice. But it must be confessed that in the exercise of this latter function they showed to anything but advantage, their acts being usually marked by bigotry and cruelty, as in the instances already noticed of De la Barre and Calas, to which may be added the case of Lally-Tollendal.

It was but natural that Madame du Barry should oppose the party of her bitter enemy De Choiseul, and that feeling, more than intelligent conviction, was doubtless at the bottom of her political predilection. Her ministers were M. de Maupeou and the Abbé Terray, both pledged to the re-establishment of prerogative and to the destruction of Constitutionalism. This could only be effected by a *coup d'état*, and to win the King's consent to this bold course the favourite unceasingly applied herself. One day she hung up in her boudoir one of Vandyke's portraits of Charles the First, while painting she had just purchased for a large sum. "Sire, they will treat you in the same manner," she cried, pointing to the picture, "if you leave these gowmen to do as they please."

After some warm fencing upon either side, the final blow was struck. Upon the night of the 19th of January, 1771, every member of the Parliament was aroused by a sergeant and two of the black musketeers, armed with the authority of a *lettre de cachet*. Of each was demanded whether he would or would not submit himself to the royal authority. The answer was a unanimous "No!" Upon which sentence of exile was pronounced against all. Each was forbidden to exercise his functions or even call himself a member of Parliament. With the Parlementaires were exiled the Duc d'Orléans and his son, the Prince de Condé, the Prince de Conti, and all the peers who had attached themselves to the party.

The pens of Voltaire and some of the Encyclopédistes, who had not forgotten the prohibition and burning of their writings, were employed to point out to the people the faults and acts of injustice committed by the old Parliament, and the necessity of reforming it; and a new one, composed of men more amenable than the last, was summoned, with which M. de

Maupeou proceeded vigorously to re-establish the royal prerogative.

Thé Duc de Choiseul was exiled to Chanteloupe—the same sentence had long since been passed upon Madame de Grammont, on account of her overbearing insolence to the favourite—where he held quite a Court, which was the favourite resort of Encyclopédistes, wits, poets and all the literary men of the age, whence continued to flow a continuous stream of gross poems, after the style of the celebrated "*La Bourbonnaise*,"\* pamphlets and satires against King, ministers, and mistress. So exasperated was Louis by some of these foul effusions, that had it not been for the intercession of Madame du Barry he would have sent the Duke to the Bastille. Not only did she save her enemy from a prison, but raised his pension to 50,000 livres, thereby largely returning good for evil.

The Countess had a charming *petit maison* at Luciennes, near Marly, a paradise of beauty and luxury. Louis, ever a prey to *ennui* among the grand apartments and tedious ceremonies of Versailles, frequently rode over there in the mornings, almost unattended. In the summer he would sit under a tree for hours together, gazing down upon the valley of the Seine, the woods of Marly, and all the beauties of the lovely landscape that lay before him. And the Countess would bring him a glass of wine and a little fruit that she had plucked with her own hand, and sit down at his feet. Or they would stroll in the grounds, accompanied by a little white spaniel and a negro boy named Zamore, dressed in fantastic costume covered with gold, who carried a red umbrella to protect them from the sun. This boy was a great favourite with both. One day the King, in a frolic, named him Governor of Luciennes, caused a document to be drawn up to that effect, and bestowed upon him an annuity of five hundred livres. Little did the Countess dream of the terrible part that this humble servile creature would one day play in her destiny!

In 1772 she was formally separated from her husband by a decree of the Châtelet du Paris. As the King's infatuation showed no sign of diminishing, it was mooted by certain persons, who still preserved some respect for morality, that since Louis could not be induced to sep-

\* A lewd doggerel, containing the supposed history of Madame du Barry, which was sung in the streets of Paris, and even under her windows.

arate from his mistress there should be amorganatic marriage. The chief promoters of this scheme were the Duc de la Vauguyon, the Cardinal de Bernis, who undertook a journey to Rome, in order to solicit the Pope to dissolve the Countess's marriage with the Count du Barry, and Marie-Thérèse, the King's pious daughter, who said that she had become a Carmelite that she might the more effectually intercede with heaven for her father's salvation. It has been asserted that the proposition was a mere political ruse which the proposers never had any intention of carrying into effect. There was one out of the three just named, however, who was thoroughly in earnest, and that was Louis's daughter. "Before all things," she said, "the King's salvation must be thought of, and to put an end to the scandal, if he cannot separate from his mistress he ought to make her his wife." Death preserved the French monarchy from this last degradation.

While these schemes were afoot the health of the King was sinking fast. That *ennui* and *tristesse* which during so many years had been the curse of his existence, which had plunged him into licentious debauchery, grew heavier and heavier as one by one he saw the contemporaries of his youth, the friends of his manhood, fall into that "blind cave of eternal night," to which day by day resistless doom carried him nearer. The Marquis de Chauvelin died before his eyes at the supper-table; a few days afterwards he was told of the demise of the Maréchal d'Armentières, who was born in the same year as himself and who had been his playmate in childhood. These were severe shocks. The physicians prescribed constant change of scene; and so he journeyed from Rambouillet to Compiègne, and from Compiègne to Choisy, and so backwards and forwards, restless, dejected, dull-eyed, leaden-cheeked, smileless, his head sunk upon his breast—a terrible picture of the jaded, worn-out voluptuary, who had drained "the wine of life" until the lees filled his mouth with nausea. An attack of smallpox, that disease so fatal to the Bourbons, terminated this wretched life, and with it the age of the *ancien régime*, on the 10th of May, 1774.\*

\* I do not quote the usually received foul story of the cause of the attack, as I believe it to be only one of the numerous hideous *canards* invented by the Revolution to intensify the vices of the last Bourbons, as if the truth were not sufficiently bad without any admixture of falsehood!

Probably there is no sovereign in modern history who is so universally execrated and so sweepingly condemned as Louis the Fifteenth. All sweeping judgments are unjust ones, and this is no exception to the rule. No man was ever so thoroughly evil but that some good might be said of him. Fair and full of the noblest promise were his early years. Virtuous, devout, a fond father, a faithful husband, in whose eyes no woman was so beautiful as the Queen—so beloved by his people, that the news of his danger filled the nation with prayers and tears, what could be more auspicious than the opening of his reign? And alas! what more gloomy and terrible than its close? Can that noble and beautiful youth, as we see him in Vanloo's picture upon the walls of Versailles, with the noble forehead, soft, frank, blue eyes and smiling gracious mouth, be the same man as that dull-eyed, leaden-cheeked creature just described? Had Louis been born in a better age there might not have been this awful gulf between the beginning and the end. Long did he remain untainted by the corruption that encompassed him upon all sides; but that vicious society could not countenance the anomaly of a virtuous king, whose virtues were a constant protest against its own demoralization, and so worked with Satanic cunning until it made him of itself. True, however, to the teachings of his youth, Louis resisted all the attacks of scepticism and infidelity, and preserved to the last a respect for religion; perhaps it was no more than devil-fear, but it was enough for remorse, out of which sprang the gloom and *ennui* that poisoned his life. He was ever flying from his conscience; he evaded it for a time in the revelry of the *petit souper*, in the arms of his mistress; but when he awoke in the morning it was couching upon his pillow, and each excess added a new terror to its aspect. As a voluptuary, a debauchee, he is a hideous blot upon the nation that gave him birth. His reign is one long story of famine and oppression. Louis the Fourteenth had left to him an empty treasury, an exhausted country, and a legacy of war. The disasters which had marked the closing years of that reign were continued through the next; defeat almost invariably attended the arms of France, and year after year more money was wrung from the groaning people to support the hopeless struggle and to supply the criminal expenditure of the sov-

reign and his favourites. Yet Louis was neither tyrannical nor cruel ; but sunk in indolent voluptuousness he heeded not the cries of his people, and suffered acts of despotism to be committed of which he sincerely disapproved. The nation was governed, not by him, but by his mistresses and *their* ministers. "They would have it so, they thought it for the best!" was his cry at every fresh break down in the executive.

But he was not all sybarite, nor is the record of his reign all evil. Few are aware how much he did to beautify and improve Paris, or how many admirable institutions, which survive as glories of the nation to this day, owe their origin to him. With his own hand he drew the plan of the Ecole Militaire for the gratuitous education of young gentlemen destined to the profession of arms. He formed three camps for practical instruction in the science of war. With his own hand he traced the plan of seventeen new routes, having Paris for their centre, together with several canals, notably that of Picardy, in the construction of which he employed his soldiers. He founded a school for the study of the Oriental languages, for the advancement of commerce and diplomacy, and despatched the Abbé Surin to Constantinople to gather such manuscripts as might prove useful to the institution. He converted his garden into a scientific establishment — the now famous Jardin des Plantes — and wrote himself the ordinances which instituted a course of instruction in Botany and Natural History. In addition to these enduring monuments he made vast improvements in the capital, constructing new and splendid buildings, opening new streets, and commenced planting the boulevards. In all these works Madame de Pompadour shares with him the honour, and in one not yet mentioned, the manufactory at Sèvres, the glory is all her own.

The evils that men do live after them,  
The good is oft interred with their bones.

So it has been with Louis the Fifteenth.

At the first commencement of the King's brief illness Madame du Barry was ordered to remove to Ruel, and it was there that tidings were brought her of his death. Immediately afterwards came an order from the new sovereign, commanding her to retire to the convent of the Pont-aux-Dames, "for reasons known to me which concern the tranquillity of my kingdom, and for the safety of certain

state secrets which have been confided to you." So ran the letter. After a time she made a humble appeal to Marie-Antoinette to be allowed to return to Luciennes. Her request was granted. Her Court friends, except a few — De Brissac, d'Aiguillon, Richelieu, and Soubise — deserted her upon her fall. But Madame la Comtesse's gay frivolous nature was not clouded by this ingratitude ; she amused herself in embellishing her retreat, bestowing alms, encouraging the fine arts, and giving balls, fêtes and *petits soupers*.

Hitherto her life had been all sunshine, but darkness was at hand. The air was filled with the mutterings of the coming tempest, and the rumblings of the earthquake were heard far and near ; but her laugh rang as clearly as ever ; no shadow of the coming doom oppressed her heart, and her feet still danced blithely over the trembling earth. This butterfly thought that, sheltered within the petals of her rosy world, the storm could not touch her ; that it would pass away, and leave her to disport once more beneath the cloudless sky.

But by-and-by a Jacobin club is established at Louveciennes, of which the negro Zamore, whom we last saw carrying a scarlet umbrella over his mistress's head, is the president. He is no longer her humble slave, but boasts himself to be the friend of Franklin and Marat, and spouts bombastic speeches about liberty and equality.

We now come to the brightest spot in this erring woman's tarnished life. Marie-Antoinette, thanks to the politic counsels of her mother, Maria Theresa, had met the favourite with something of cordiality ; but it was impossible that this *agrément* between two such opposite persons and such opposite interests could be of long duration ; a wicked jest made upon him by Madame du Barry being reported to the Dauphin, there was an immediate rupture which was never healed during the lifetime of Louis the Fifteenth. But when serious tribulation fell upon the royal family they found no truer nor more devoted friend than Madame du Barry. She wrote to the Queen, begging her to accept of all that she possessed. She sold her jewels to aid her necessity ; she risked and ultimately lost her life in her service.

In 1791, she raised a cry that she had been robbed of a number of valuable jewels, and offered a large reward for the discovery of the robber. Soon after-

wards she pretended that the thief had been captured in London, and that it was necessary for her to go thither to identify and claim her property. She accordingly obtained a passport, and journeyed to England. There is little or no doubt that the whole story was a fabrication; De Brissac, probably, had conveyed the diamonds to Marie-Antoinette; the story of the capture was a ruse to leave France on a secret mission. In London she was handsomely received by Pitt, and in the best society. She returned home in the December of the same year. But in the early part of 1792 she again returned to England, still ostensibly upon the diamond business, pledging herself, upon obtaining her passport, to return within a month. The exact nature of her mission would be difficult to discover among the countless intrigues of the *émigrés* at this period; as the accredited agent of the Queen, however, she visited the Princess of Lorraine, De Rohan, M. de Calonne, and many others, and assisted in a solemn funeral service for the King. This sealed her doom. Pitt endeavoured to persuade her not to return to Paris, predicting that if she did she would meet the fate of Regulus.

His words were indeed prophetic. She found all wild confusion at Louveciennes; Zamore and the patriot club in possession, her treasures rifled, her splendid *salons* wrecked by a troop of drunken ruffians who robbed in the name of liberty. Too late she repented of the rash confidence which had urged her to plunge herself into the vortex; escape was now impossible. On the 3rd of July, 1793, having been denounced by the treacherous black, an order was issued for her arrest. By a strange coincidence, her cell at the Conciergerie was the same which had just previously been occupied by Marie-Antoinette. These two women had reigned as rival queens at Versailles, and that vast palace was not large enough to contain them both; they had all the *noblesse* of France for attendants. Could any magician at that time have lifted the roseate veil and shown them the torrent *beyond*—the dim narrow cell, the heap of filthy straw, the black loaf, the earthen pitcher of stagnant water, the rough, red-capped, *sabot*-footed, but kindly Richard, the *concierger* and his wife, their sole attendants, themselves arrayed in coarse prison dress! Once more I cannot refrain from quoting the wondrous wise words of the mad Ophelia: *We know*

*what we are, but we know not what we may be!*

Her judge was the brutal Fouquier-Tinville; her accuser, Zamore. The blow might have well come from some other hand than his. The principal accusations against her were, having during the late King's life squandered vast sums of the people's money (that accusation was just and true), of being still possessed of great treasures thus wrongfully acquired, and having been engaged in secret plots to restore the royal family. At first she met these charges scornfully and boldly, but when sentence of death was pronounced all courage deserted her and she was carried almost fainting back to her prison.

The painful scene of her execution is thus vividly described by one who was an eye-witness:

Upon arriving at the Pont au Change I found a very large crowd assembled there. I had no need to ask the reason of the assemblage, for at that moment I heard the most terrible cries, and almost immediately saw come out of the court of the Palace of Justice that fatal cart which Barrère, in one of those fits of gaiety which are so common to him, called "the bier of the living." A woman was in that cart, which slowly drew near to the spot upon which I was standing. Her figure, her attitude, her gestures, expressed the most frightful despair. Alternately red and deathly pale, she struggled with the executioner and his two assistants, who could scarcely hold her upon the bench, and uttering those piercing cries which had first arrested me, she turned incessantly from one to the other, invoking pity. It was Madame du Barry, being conveyed to execution. . . . Only about forty-two or forty-three years of age,\* she was still, in spite of the terror which disfigured her features, remarkably beautiful. Clothed wholly in white, like Marie-Antoinette, who had preceded her a few weeks previously upon the same route, her beautiful black hair formed a contrast similar to that presented by a funeral pall cast over a coffin. "In the name of heaven!" she cried amidst her tears and sobs, "in the name of heaven save me. I have never done ill to any one. Save me!" The delirious frenzy of this unfortunate woman produced such an impression among the people that even those who came to gloat over her sufferings had not the courage to cast at her a word of insult. Every one around appeared stupefied, and no cries were heard but hers; but her cries were so piercing, that I believe they would have drowned even those of the mob had they been uttered. . . . During the whole route she never ceased her shrieks for "Life, life!" and to struggle frantically to

\* Others say fifty.

elude death which had seized upon her already. Upon arriving at the scaffold it was necessary to employ force to attach her to the fatal plank, and her last words were, "Mercy! Mercy! but one moment longer, but one" — and all was said.

She was the only one of the aristocrats who disgraced the order by any show of cowardice; all others, women as well as men, met their doom with Spartan courage.

Between the writers of De Choiseul's party and those of the Revolution more foul stories and harsher judgments have been circulated against Madame du Barry than any other woman of her generation. And even at the present day the popular ideas concerning her, both in France and England, are derived from those mendacious sources. No human being during his or her lifetime was ever overwhelmed with more opprobrium, and yet she never committed one revengeful act against her defamers and enemies; never once solicited a *lettre de cachet*. On the contrary, we have seen that she not only interceded to save De Choiseul from a prison, but even conferred benefits upon him at a time when he was straining every nerve to destroy her. Many anecdotes are told of her tenderness of heart and of her generosity, and how frequently she pleaded to the King for poor prisoners condemned to death upon slight or pitiable charges. No person in distress ever appealed to her in vain. Her behaviour towards Marie-Antoinette has been already commented upon. When the actor Dauberval, overwhelmed by debts, wrote to her for assistance, she immediately set about raising a subscription; she compelled every great lord of the Court to lay down five louis, until, with her own donation, she had gathered for him two thousand. This is but one out of many anecdotes told of her generosity. She was the protectress of all *débütants* at the theatres, and a munificent patroness to artists and all men of genius; not, like Pompadour, from the exquisite appreciation of an artistic mind, but rather from good-heartedness.

She was a creation as essentially of the eighteenth century as butterflies are of June. With her the moral faculties were not merely weak and easily subjugated, but positively had no existence: her nature was all sensuous, and sensuousness ripened into sensualism; every fancy, passion, whim, enslaved her for the time being; self-denial she knew not;

with her, free indulgence was the only happiness; restraint, privation, were unbearable. Pain, and gloom, and sorrow, whether menacing herself or others, were abhorrent to her. She loved to see only sunshine and smiling faces. Life was to her a carnival, a bacchanalian orgie, in which all should eat, drink and be merry.

To moralize upon the life of royal favourites would be impertinently superfluous. The story of each one carries its own moral. La Vallière, even in her days of passionate love and of exaltation, haunted by the shadow of her sin, atoning in the Carmelite cell for her brief rapture through years of mortification and penitence; De Montespan, expiating her short-lived splendour by all the tortures of degraded pride and the bitterness of remorse; De Maintenon, dying solitary and unloved within the gloomy walls of St. Cyr; De Mailly, weeping away her life in penitential tears; De Châteauroux, struck dead in the moment of returning triumph; De Pompadour, slowly dying, yet still wearing out her heart in inventing new diversions to dispel the morbid ennui of her royal lover, and ever racked by apprehension lest another should usurp her place; Du Barry, shrieking for life in the headsman's cart, dying despairing upon the guillotine: could the most eloquent of moralists or preachers heighten the effect of such lesson as these?

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From The Cornhill Magazine.

#### SUNSET ON MONT BLANC.

I PROFESS myself to be a loyal adherent of the ancient Monarch of Mountains, and, as such, I hold as a primary article of faith the doctrine that no Alpine summit is, as a whole, comparable in sublimity and beauty to Mont Blanc. With all his faults and weaknesses, and in spite of a crowd of upstart rivals, he still deserves to reign in solitary supremacy. Such an opinion seems to some mountaineers as great an anachronism as the creed of a French Legitimist. The coarse flattery of guide-books has done much to surround him with vulgarizing associations; even the homage of poets and painters has deprived his charms of their early freshness, and climbers have ceased to regard his conquest as a glorious, or, indeed, as anything but a most commonplace exploit. And yet Mont



Blanc has merits which no unintelligent worship can obscure, and which bind with growing fascination the unprejudiced lover of scenery. Tried by a low, but not quite a meaningless standard, the old monarch can still extort respect. He can show a longer list of killed and wounded than any other mountain in the Alps, or almost than all other mountains put together. In his milder moods he may be approached with tolerable safety even by the inexperienced; but in angry moments, when he puts on his robe of clouds and mutters with his voice of thunder, no mountain is so terrible. Even the light snow-wreaths that eddy gracefully across his brow in fine weather sometimes testify to an icy storm that pierces the flesh and freezes the very marrow of the bones. But we should hardly estimate the majesty of men or mountains by the length of their butcher's bill. Mont Blanc has other and less questionable claims on our respect. He is the most solitary of mountains, rising, Saul-like, a head and shoulders above the crowd of attendant peaks, and yet, within that single mass, there is greater prodigality of the sublimest scenery than in whole mountain districts of inferior elevation. The sternest and most massive of cliffs, the wildest spires of distorted rock, bounding torrents of shattered ice, snow-fields polished and even as a sea-shell, are combined into a whole of infinite variety and yet of artistic unity. One might wander for days, were such wanderings made possible by other conditions, amongst his crowning snows, and every day would present new combinations of unsuspected grandeur.

Why, indeed, some critics will ask, should we love a ruler of such questionable attributes? Scientifically speaking, the so-called monarch is but so many tons of bleak granite determining a certain quantity of aqueous precipitation. And if for literary purposes it be permissible to personify a monstrous rock, the worship of such a Moloch has in it something unnatural. In the mouth of the poet who first invested him with royal honours, the language was at least in keeping. Byron's misanthropy, real or affected, might identify love of nature with hatred of mankind: and a savage, shapeless and lifeless idol was a fitting centre for his enthusiasm. But we have ceased to believe in the Childe Harolds and the Manfreds. Become a hermit—denounce your species, and shrink from their contact, and you may consistently

love the peaks where human life exists on sufferance, and whose message to the valleys is conveyed in wasting torrents or crushing avalanches. Men of saner mind who repudiate this anti-social creed, should love the fertile valleys and grass-clad ranges better than these symbols of the sternest desolation. All the enthusiasm for the wilder scenery, when it is not simple affectation, is the product of a temporary phase of sentiment, of which the *raison-d'être* has now ceased to exist. To all which the zealot may perhaps reply most judiciously, Be it as you please. Prefer, if you see fit, a Leicestershire meadow or even a Lincolnshire fen to the cliff and glacier, and exalt the view from the Crystal Palace above the widest of Alpine panoramas. Natural scenery, like a great work of art, scorns to be tied down to any cut and dried moral. To each spectator it suggests a different train of thought and emotion, varying as widely as the idiosyncrasy of the mind affected. If Mont Blanc produces in you nothing but a sense of hopeless savagery, well and good; confess it honestly to yourself and to the world, and do not help to swell the chorus of insincere ecstasy. But neither should you quarrel with those in whom the same sight produces emotions of a very different kind. That man is the happiest and wisest who can draw delight from the most varied objects: from the quiet bandbox scenery of cultivated England, or from the boundless prairies of the West; from the Thames or the Amazon, Malvern or Mont Blanc, the Virginia Water or the Atlantic Ocean. If the reaction which made men escape with sudden ecstasy from trim gardens to rough mountain sides was somewhat excessive, yet there was in it a core of sound feeling. Does not science teach us more and more emphatically that nothing which is natural can be alien to us who are part of nature? Where does Mont Blanc end, and where do I begin? That is a question which no metaphysician has hitherto succeeded in answering. But at least the connection is close and intimate. He is a part of the great machinery in which my physical frame is inextricably involved, and not the less interesting because a part which I am unable to subdue to my purposes. The whole universe, from the stars and the planets to the mountains and the insects which creep about their roots, is but a network of forces eternally acting and reacting upon each other.

The mind of man is a musical instrument upon which all external objects are beating out infinitely complex harmonies and discords. Too often, indeed, it becomes a mere barrel-organ, mechanically repeating the tunes which have once been impressed upon it. But in proportion as it is more vigorous or delicate, it should retain its sensibility to all the impulses which may be conveyed to it from the most distant sources. And certainly a healthy organization should not be deaf to those more solemn and melancholy voices which speak through the wildest aspects of nature. "Our sweetest songs," as Shelley says in his best mood, "are those which tell of saddest thought." No poetry or art is of the highest order in which there is not blended some strain of melancholy, even to sternness. Shakespeare would not be Shakespeare if it were not for that profound sense of the transitory in all human affairs which appears in the finest sonnets and in his deepest dramatic utterances. When he tells us of the unsubstantial fabric of the great globe itself, or the glorious morning which "flatters the mountain tops with sovereign eye," only to be hidden by the "basest clouds," or, anticipating modern geologists, observes —

The hungry ocean gain  
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,

he is merely putting into words the thoughts obscurely present to the mind of every watcher of the eternal mountains which have outlasted so many generations, and are yet, like all other things, hastening to decay. The mountains represent the indomitable forces of nature to which we are forced to adapt ourselves; they speak to man of his littleness and his ephemeral existence; they rouse us from the placid content in which we may be lapped when contemplating the fat fields which we have conquered and the rivers which we have forced to run according to our notions of convenience. And, therefore, they should suggest not sheer misanthropy, as they did to Byron, or an outburst of revolutionary passion, as they did to his teacher Rousseau, but that sense of awestruck humility which befits such petty creatures as ourselves.

It is true, indeed, that Mont Blanc sometimes is too savage for poetry. He can speak in downright tragic earnestness; and any one who has been caught in a storm on some of his higher ice-fields, who has trembled at the deadly

swoop of the gale, or at the ominous sound which heralds an avalanche, or at the remorseless settling down of the blinding snow, will agree that at times he passes the limits of the terrible which comes fairly within the range of art. There are times, however, at which one may expect to find precisely the right blending of the sweet and the stern. And in particular, there are those exquisite moments when the sunset is breathing over his calm snow-fields in "ardours of rest and love." Watched from beneath, the Alpine glow, as everybody knows, is of exquisite beauty; but unfortunately the spectacle has become a little too popular. The very sunset seems to smell of *Baedeker's Guide*. The flesh is weak; and the most sympathetic of human beings is apt to feel a slight sense of revulsion when the French guests at a *table-d'hôte* are exclaiming in chorus, *Magnifique, superbe!* and the Germans chiming in with *wunderschön!* and the British tourist patting the old mountain on the back, and the American protesting that he has shinier sunsets at home. Not being of a specially sympathetic nature, I had frequently wondered how that glorious spectacle would look from the solitary top of the monarch himself. This summer I was fortunate enough, owing to the judicious arrangements of one of his most favoured courtiers, to be able to give an answer founded on personal experience. The result was to me so interesting that I shall venture — rash as the attempt may be — to give some account of a phenomenon of extraordinary beauty which has hitherto been witnessed by not more than some half-dozen human beings.

It was in the early morning of the 6th of August last that I left Chamonix for the purpose. The sun rose on one of those fresh dewy dawns unknown except in the mountains, when the buoyant air seems as it were to penetrate every pore in one's body. I could almost say with Sir Galahad —

This mortal armour that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touch'd and turn'd to finest air.

The heavy, sodden framework of flesh and blood which I languidly dragged along London streets, has undergone a strange transformation, and it is with scarcely a conscious effort that I breast the monstrous hill which towers above me. The pinewoods give out their aromatic scent, and the little glades are deep in ferns, wild-flowers and strawberries.

Even here, the latent terrors of the mountain are kept in mind by the huge boulders which, at some distant day, have crashed like cannon-balls through the forest. But the great mountain is not now indulging in one of his ponderous games at bowls, and the soft carpeting of tender vegetation suggests rather luxurious indolence, and, maybe, recalls lazy picnics rather than any more strenuous memories. Before long, however, we emerged from the forest, and soon the bells of a jolly little company of goats bade us farewell on the limits of the civilized world, as we stepped upon the still frozen glacier and found ourselves fairly in the presence. We were alone with the mighty dome, dazzling our eyes in the brilliant sunshine, and guarded by its sleeping avalanches. Luckily there was no temptation to commit the abomination of walking "against time" or racing any rival caravan of climbers. The whole day was before us, for it would have been undesirable to reach the chilly summit too early; and we could afford the unusual luxury of lounging up Mont Blanc. We took, I hope, full advantage of our opportunities. We could peer into the blue depths of crevasses, so beautiful that one might long for such a grave, were it not for the awkward prospect of having one's bones put under a glass case by the next generation of scientific travellers. We could record in our memories the strange forms of the shattered seracs, those grotesque ice-masses which seem to suggest that the monarch himself has a certain clumsy sense of humour. We lingered longest on the summit of the Dôme du Goûte, itself a most majestic mountain were it not overawed by its gigantic neighbour. There, on the few ledges of rock which are left exposed in summer the thunder has left its scars. The lightning's strokes have covered numbers of stones with little glass-like heads, showing that this must be one of its favourite haunts. But on this glorious summer day the lightnings were at rest; and we could peacefully count over the vast wilderness of peaks which already stretched far and wide beneath our feet. The lower mountain ranges appeared to be drawn up in parallel ranks like the sea waves heaved in calm weather by a monotonous groundswell. Each ridge was blended into a uniform hue by the intervening atmosphere, sharply defined along the summit line, and yet only distinguished from its predecessor and successor by a delicate

gradation of tone. Such a view produces the powerful but shadowy impression which one expects from an opium dream. The vast perspective drags itself out to a horizon so distant as to blend imperceptibly with the lower sky. It has a vague suggestion of rhythmical motion, strangely combined with eternal calm. Drop a pebble into a perfectly still sheet of water; imagine that each ripple is supplanted by a lofty mountain range, of which all detail is lost in purple haze, and that the furthest undulations melt into the mysterious infinite. One gazes with a sense of soothing melancholy as one listens to plaintive modulations of some air of linked "sweetness long drawn out." Far away among the hills we could see long reaches of the peaceful Lake of Geneva, just gleaming through the varying purple; but at our backs the icy crest of the great mountain still rose proudly above us, to remind us that our task was not yet finished. Fortunately for us scarcely a cloud was to be seen under the enormous concave of the dark blue heavens; a few light streamers of cirrus were moving gently over our heads in those remote abysses from which they never condescend even to the loftiest of Alpine summits. Faint and evanescent as they might be, they possibly had an ominous meaning for the future, but the present was our own; the little puffs of wind that whispered round some lofty ledges were keen enough in quality to remind us of possible frost-bites, but they had scarcely force enough to extinguish a match.

Carefully calculating our time, we advanced along the "dromedary's hump" and stepped upon the culminating ridge of the mountain about an hour before sunset. We had time to collect ourselves, to awake our powers of observation, and to prepare for the grand spectacle, for which preparations were already being made. There had been rehearsals enough in all conscience to secure a perfect performance. For millions of ages the lamps had been lighted and the transparencies had been shown with no human eye to observe or hand to applaud. Twice, I believe only twice, before, an audience had taken its place in this lofty gallery; but on one of those occasions, at least, the observers had been too unwell to do justice to the spectacle. The other party, of which the chief member was a French man of science, Dr. Martens, had been obliged to retreat hastily before the lights were extinguished; but their fragmentary account had excited our curiosity, and we

had the pleasure of verifying the most striking phenomenon which they described. And now we waited eagerly for the performance to commence; the cold was sufficient to freeze the wine in our bottles, but in still air the cold is but little felt, and by walking briskly up and down and adopting the gymnastic exercise in which the London cabman delights in cold weather, we were able to keep a sufficient degree of circulation. I say "we," but I am libelling the most enthusiastic member of the party. A French painter — his name will be easily guessed by visitors to Chamonix — sat resolutely on the snow, at the risk, as we might have thought, of following the example of Lot's wife. Superior, as it appeared, to all the frailties which beset the human frame suddenly plunged into a temperature I know not how many degrees below freezing point, he worked with ever increasing fury in a desperate attempt to fix upon canvas some of the magic beauties of the scene. Glancing from earth to heaven and from north to south, sketching with breathless rapidity the appearance of the eastern ranges, and then wheeling round like a weathercock to make hasty notes of the western clouds, breaking out at times into uncontrollable exclamations of delight, or reproving his thoughtless companions when their opaque bodies eclipsed a whole quarter of the heavens, he enjoyed, I should fancy, an hour of as keen delight as not often occurs to an enthusiastic lover of the sublime in nature. We laughed, envied and admired, and he escaped frost-bites. I wish that I could substitute his canvas, though, to say the truth, I fear it would exhibit a slight confusion of the points of the compass, for my words; but, as that is impossible, I must endeavour briefly to indicate the most impressive features of the scenery. My readers must kindly set their imaginations to work in aid of feeble language; for even the most eloquent language is but a poor substitute for a painter's brush, and a painter's brush lags far behind these grandest aspects of nature. The easiest way of obtaining the impression is to follow my example; for in watching a sunset from Mont Blanc one feels that one is passing one of those rare moments of life at which all the surrounding scenery is instantaneously and indelibly photographed on the mental retina by a process which no second-hand operation can even dimly transfer to others. To explain its nature requires a word or two of preface.

The ordinary view from Mont Blanc is not specially picturesque — and for a sufficient reason. The architect has concentrated his whole energies in producing a single impression. Everything has been so arranged as to intensify the sense of vast height and an illimitable horizon. In a good old guide-book, I have read, on the authority (I think) of Pliny, that the highest mountain in the world is 300,000 feet above the sea; and one is apt to fancy on ascending Mont Blanc, that the guess is not so far out. The effect is perfectly unique in the Alps; but it is produced at a certain sacrifice. All dangerous rivals have been removed to such a distance as to become apparently insignificant. No grand mass can be admitted into the foreground; for the sense of vast size is gradually forced upon you by the infinite multiplicity of detail. Mont Blanc must be like an Asiatic despot, alone and supreme, with all inferior peaks reverently couched at his feet. If a man, previously as ignorant of geography as a boy who had just left a public school, could be transported for a moment to the summit, his impression would be that the Alps resembled a village of fifty hovels grouped round a stupendous cathedral. Fully to appreciate this effect requires a certain familiarity with Alpine scenery, for otherwise the effect produced is a dwarfing of the inferior mountains into pettiness instead of an exaltation of Mont Blanc into almost portentous magnificence. Grouped around you at unequal distances are a series of white patches, looking like the tented encampments of scattered army corps. Hold up a glove at arm's length, and it will cover the whole of such a group. On the boundless plain beneath (I say "plain," for the greatest mountain system of Europe appears to have subsided into a rather uneven plain), it is a mere spot, a trifling dent upon the huge shield on whose central boss you are placed. But you know, though at first you can hardly realize the knowledge, that that insignificant discolouration represents a whole mountain district. One spot, for example, represents the clustered peaks of the Bernese Oberland; a block, as big as a pebble, is the soaring Jungfrau, the terrible mother of avalanches; a barely distinguishable wrinkle is the reverse of those snowy wastes of the Blümlis Alp, which seem to be suspended above the terrace of Berne, thirty miles away; and that little whitish streak represents the greatest ice-stream of the Alps, the huge

Aletsch glacier, whose monstrous proportions have been impressed upon you by hours of laborious plodding. One patch contains the main sources from which the Rhine descends to the German Ocean, two or three more overlook the Italian plains and encircle the basin of the Po; from a more distant group flows the Danube, and from your feet the snows melt to supply the Rhone. You feel that you are in some sense looking down upon Europe from Rotterdam to Venice and from Varna to Marseilles. The vividness of the impression depends entirely upon the degree to which you can realize the immense size of all these immeasurable details. Now, in the morning, the usual time for ascent, the details are necessarily vague, because the noblest part of the view lies between the sun and the spectator. But in the evening light each ridge, and peak, and glacier, stands out with startling distinctness, and each, therefore, is laden with its weight of old association. There, for example, was the grim Matterhorn: its angular dimensions were of infinitesimal minuteness; it would puzzle a mathematician to say how small a space its image would occupy on his retina; but, within that small space, its form was defined with exquisite accuracy; and we could recognize the precise configuration of the wild labyrinth of rocky ridges up which the earlier adventurers forced their way from the Italian side. And thus we not only knew, but felt that at our feet was lying a vast slice of the map of Europe. The effect was to exaggerate the apparent height, till the view had about it something portentous and unnatural: it seemed to be such a view as could be granted not even to mountaineers of earthly mould, but rather to some genie from the *Arabian Nights*, flying high above a world tinted with the magical colouring of old romance.

Thus distinctly drawn, though upon so minute a scale, every rock and slope preserved its true value, and the impression of stupendous height became almost oppressive as it was forced upon the imagination that a whole world of mountains, each of them a mighty mass in itself, lay couched far beneath our feet, reaching across the whole diameter of the vast panorama. And now, whilst occupied in drinking in that strange sensation, and allowing our minds to recover their equilibrium from the first staggering shock of astonishment, began the strange spectacle of which we were the sole witnesses.

One long delicate cloud, suspended in mid-air just below the sun, was gradually adorning itself with prismatic colouring. Round the limitless horizon ran a faint fog-bank, unfortunately not quite thick enough to produce that depth of colouring which sometimes makes an Alpine sunset inexpressibly gorgeous. The weather—it was the only complaint we had to make—erred on the side of fineness. But the colouring was brilliant enough to prevent any thoughts of serious disappointment. The long series of western ranges melted into a uniform hue as the sun declined in their rear. Amidst their folds the Lake of Geneva became suddenly lighted up in a faint yellow gleam. To the east a blue gauze seemed to cover each valley as they sank into night and the intervening ridges rose with increasing distinctness, or rather it seemed that some fluid of exquisite delicacy of colour and substance was flooding all the lower country beneath the great mountains. Peak by peak the high snow-fields caught the rosy glow and shone like signal-fires across the dim breadths of delicate twilight. Like Xerxes, we looked over the countless host sinking into rest, but with the rather different reflection, that a hundred years hence they would probably be doing much the same thing, whilst we should long have ceased to take any interest in the performance. And suddenly began a more startling phenomenon. A vast cone, with its apex pointing away from us, seemed to be suddenly cut out from the world beneath; night was within its borders and the twilight still all round; the blue mists were quenched where it fell, and for the instant we could scarcely tell what was the origin of this strange appearance. Some unexpected change seemed to have taken place in the programme; as though a great fold in the curtain had suddenly given way, and dropped on to part of the scenery. Of course a moment's reflection explained the meaning of this uncanny intruder; it was the giant shadow of Mont Blanc, testifying to his supremacy over all meaner eminences. It is difficult to say how sharply marked was the outline, and how startling was the contrast between this pyramid of darkness and the faintly-lighted spaces beyond its influence; a huge inky blot seemed to have suddenly fallen upon the landscape. As we gazed we could see it move. It swallowed up ridge by ridge, and the sharp point crept steadily from one landmark



to another down the broad valley of Aosta. We were standing, in fact, on the point of the gnomon of a gigantic sundial, the face of which was formed by thousands of square miles of mountain and valley. So clear was the outline, that if figures had been scrawled upon glaciers and ridges, we could have told the time to a second; indeed, we were half-inclined to look for our own shadows at a distance so great that whole villages would be represented by a scarcely distinguishable speck of colouring. The huge shadow, looking ever more strange and magical, struck the distant Becca di Nona, and then climbed into the dark region where the broader shadow of the world was rising into the eastern sky. By some singular effect of perspective, rays of darkness seemed to be converging from above our heads to a point immediately above the apex of the shadowy cone. For a time it seemed that there was a kind of anti-sun in the east, pouring out not light, but deep shadow as it rose. The apex soon reached the horizon, and then to our surprise began climbing the distant sky. Would it never stop, and was Mont Blanc capable of overshadowing not only the earth but the sky? For a minute or two I fancied in a bewildered way that this unearthly object would fairly rise from the ground and climb upwards to the zenith. But rapidly the lights went out upon the great army of mountains; the snow all round took the livid hue which immediately succeeds an Alpine sunset, and almost at a blow the shadow of Mont Blanc was swallowed up in the general shade of night. The display had ceased suddenly at its culminating point, and it was highly expedient for the spectators to retire. We had no time to lose if we would get off the summit before the grip of the frost should harden the snows into an ice-crust; and in a minute we were running and sliding downwards at our best pace towards the familiar Corridor. Yet as we went the sombre magnificence of the scenery seemed for a time to increase. We were between the day and the night. The western heavens were of the most brilliant blue with spaces of transparent green, whilst a few scattered cloudlets glowed as if with internal fire. To the east the night rushed up furiously, and it was difficult to imagine that the dark purple sky was really cloudless, and not blackened by the rising of some portentous storm. That it was, in fact, cloudless, appeared from the unbroken disc of the full moon, which, if I may

venture to say so, had a kind of silly expression, as though it were a bad imitation of the sun, totally unable to keep the darkness in order.

With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st  
the sky,  
How silently and with how wan a face!

as Sydney exclaims. And truly, set in that strange gloom the moon looked wan and miserable enough; the lingering sunlight showed by contrast that she was but a feeble source of illumination; and but for her half-comic look of helplessness, we might have sympathized with the astronomers who tell us that she is nothing but a vast perambulating tombstone, proclaiming to all mankind in the words of the familiar epitaph, "As I am now, you soon shall be!" To speak after the fashion of early mythologies, one might fancy that some supernatural cuttlefish was shedding his ink through the heavens to distract her, and that the poor moon had but a bad chance of escaping his clutches. Hurrying downwards with occasional glances at the sky, we had soon reached the Grand Plateau, whence our further retreat was secure, and from that wildest of mountain fastnesses we saw the last striking spectacle of the evening. In some sense it was perhaps the most impressive of all. As all Alpine travellers know, the Grand Plateau is a level space of evil omen, embraced by a vast semicircle of icy slopes. The avalanches which occasionally descend across it, and which have caused more than one catastrophe, give it a bad reputation; and at night the icy jaws of the great mountain seem to be enclosing you in a fatal embrace. At this moment there was something half-grotesque in its sternness. Light and shade were contrasted in a manner so bold as to be almost bizarre. One half of the cirque was of a pallid white against the night, which was rushing up still blacker and thicker, except that a few daring stars shone out like fiery sparks against a pitchy canopy; the other half, reflecting the black night, was relieved against the last gleams of daylight; in front a vivid band of blood-red light burned along the horizon, beneath which seemed to lie an abyss of mysterious darkness. It was the last struggle between night and day, and the night seemed to assume a more ghastly ferocity as the day sank, pale and cold, before its antagonist. The Grand Plateau, indeed, is a fit scene for such contrasts; for there in

midday you may feel the reflection from the blinding snows like the blast of a furnace, where a few hours before you were realizing the keenest pangs of frost-bite. The cold and the night were now the conquerors, and the angry sunset glow seemed to grudge the victory. The light rapidly faded, and the darkness, no longer seen in the strange contrast, subsided to its ordinary tones. The magic was gone; and it was in a commonplace though lovely summer night that we reached our resting place at the Grands Mulets.

We felt that we had learnt some new secrets as to the beauty of mountain scenery, but the secrets were of that kind which not even the initiated can reveal. A great poet might interpret the sentiment of the mountains into song; but no poet could pack into any definite proposition or series of propositions the strange thoughts that rise in different spectators of such a scene. All that I at last can say is that some indefinable mixture of exhilaration and melancholy pervades one's mind; one feels like a kind of cheerful Tithonus "at the quiet limit of the world," looking down from a magic elevation upon the "dim fields about the homes

Of happy men that have the power to die."

One is still of the earth, earthy; for freezing trees and snow-parched noses are lively reminders that one has not become an immortal. Even on the top of Mont Blanc one may be a very long way from heaven. And yet the mere physical elevation of a league above the sea level seems to raise one by moments into a sphere above the petty interests of everyday life. Why that should be so, and by what strange threads of association the reds and blues of a gorgeous sunset, the fantastic shapes of clouds and shadows at that dizzy height, and the dramatic changes that sweep over the boundless region beneath your feet, should stir you like mysterious music, or, indeed, why music itself should have such power, I leave to philosophers to explain. This only I know, that even the memory of that summer evening on the top of Mont Blanc has power to plunge me into strange reveries not to be analyzed by any capacity, and still less capable of expression by the help of a few black remarks on white paper.

One word must be added. The expedition I have described is perfectly safe and easy, if, but only if, two or three conditions be scrupulously observed. The

weather, of course, must be faultless; the snow must be in perfect order or a retreat may be difficult; and to guard against unforeseen contingencies which are so common in high mountains, there should be a sufficient force of guides more trustworthy than the gentry who hang about Chamonix drinking-places. If these precautions be neglected, serious accidents would be easy, and at any rate there would be a very fair chance that the enthusiastic lover of scenery would leave his toes behind him.

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From The Westminster Review.

#### THE USE OF LOOKING AT PICTURES.

MATTER-OF-FACT people sometimes ask what good is to be got by looking at pictures. The good is of different kinds, differing of course according to the nature of the picture. It is a good thing to look at the picture of a beautiful man, or woman, or child. It is a better thing, no doubt, to look at the realities themselves; but then a truly beautiful face is not to be seen every day, and when we do see it, it is often unequally yoked to an unshapely body, and when face and figure are alike beautiful, the effect of both is often half spoiled by a hideous dress, be it tall hat, tail-coat, crinoline, earring, or some such monstrosity. If once or twice in our lives we see a perfect combination of face, figure, and drapery, even then we cannot stop our prize and look at it for half-an-hour, as we can with a picture. And yet again, supposing we could do this, the majority of us would be unable to appreciate what we saw, unless we had first been educated by pictures. Between a Madonna of Raphael's and a pretty dairymaid there is much the same difference as between a sonata of Beethoven's and "Rule Britannia." An uncultivated man can no more appreciate the Madonna than the sonata, and would probably regard the Madonna vivified as inferior to the heroine of a provincial ball-room. The first thing, then, that a picture does for us is that it makes us see a certain good thing, which without it we should see either not at all, or less wisely and less well. This good thing is beauty.

So much for pictures which reproduce man's face and form. An analogous good is to be got by looking at a landscape painting. A landscape does one of two things for us. It either reproduces the rarities, or interprets for us the com-

monplaces of nature. It either represents for us a singularly beautiful scene such as few of us ever see, and that seldom, a grand mountain-pass, a peculiar sunrise or sunset; or else it paints for us "things perhaps we have passed a hundred times nor cared to see," the play of light and shadow on hill, and river, and tree. Here again the good thing which the picture makes us see is beauty, the beauty of things such as rocks, and clouds, or of half-things such as trees and flowers, while the other picture made us see the beauty of persons. Pictures of animals occupy the border line between these two classes of painting. Animals are both too near us, and not near enough. They are so near that in judging them we cannot help applying to them a human standard. They are so far from us that their best beauty appears a mere caricature of human beauty. Thus it comes that pictures of animals commonly affect us less than pictures of men or landscapes. We stand awed before Titian's "Christ" in the Dresden picture, overwhelmed before the glory of the setting sun in Turner's "Ulysses and Polyphemus;" but Landseer's dogs and horses at most please and interest us. But, be this as it may, it is the beauty which a seeing eye can trace in beast, bird, flower, and thing, that a picture shows us, and shows us better than anything else can show us. To interpret therefore this beauty is the main end of the art of painting, and the right enjoyment of this beauty is the main end of the act of picture-seeing. Such enjoyment is not the main good of life, but it is the good which we go to a picture to get. We call it the *aesthetic* good as contrasted with the moral or scientific or utilitarian good to be got from it or other things.

Now, what do we mean when we talk of beauty? The term stands for a highly composite quality, nor does it carry any one uniform meaning. It stands, first, for a visible quality, which the eyes can appreciate unaided—namely, brightness and harmony of colour. This quality may be seen alike in a landscape, in a bird's plumage, or in flesh and drapery. It stands secondly for a quality of form—namely, gracefulness, by which we mean the attainment of a certain end with the greatest possible economy in the means used to produce it. Thus a high tree stably supported on a slender stem, a difficult movement performed with little exertion, are alike, and for the same

reason, considered graceful. It stands next for symmetry of parts, a quality little found in trees and flowers, but eminently characteristic of a perfect animal. It stands last for a certain quality of feature, for marks of health, of goodness, and of high intellect, for the type of human countenance with which Greek statues have familiarized us.\* It will be clear from this that the conception of beauty is a conception of singular complexity, and that in the use of the term there is great danger of equivocation. The term, however, differs in complexity according to the things to which it is applied. When applied to a landscape or drapery, it signifies little more than brightness and harmony of colour, although here there is danger of confusion with the really distinct terms, grandeur and sublimity. When applied to the body of an animal it signifies also gracefulness and symmetry of parts. When applied to the human face, all the constituents of the conception are introduced.

The ideal human face, therefore, will be the face in which a certain brightness and harmony of colour, joined to a certain symmetry of parts, is found in combination with the marks of health, goodness, and intelligence. The first test will exclude the combination of red hair and blue eyes, the second test will exclude the crooked nose or the squint, the third test will exclude sallowness or a prominent jaw, or a retreating forehead. To be perfectly beautiful, a face must satisfy all the three tests; to be beautiful, it must satisfy most of them. Deviations from the ideal cannot be tolerated by the impartial critic beyond a certain limit. Let us assume that there is such a limit—an ideal line marking off beautiful from not-beautiful faces; and let us define beautiful faces as faces in which the beautiful elements so preponderate over the not-beautiful, that the perfect critic can contemplate them with pleasure. Now, any face which is included within this line and the point of ideal beauty, will not only please this man or that man according to personal feeling or casual association, but will please every one. It follows that a picture which reproduces such a face will (if the skill in representing be as excellent as the thing represented) please not this man or that man, nor this age or that age, but all men and all times. It will satisfy the

\* Consult on this subject Mr. H. Spencer's admirable essay on Personal Beauty.

æsthetic sense of mankind. On the other hand, a face which falls outside the mean line of beauty must derive its charm from some association interesting to this man or that man, but not interesting, or if interesting, interesting for other than æsthetic reasons, to the world at large. It follows that a picture which reproduces such a face will fail to satisfy the æsthetic sense of mankind. But a large number of modern painters, especially painters of the Dutch school, habitually reproduce faces and figures of this class. Either, therefore, such painters are deficient in the power of discriminating what is, from what is not, beautiful, or the public, to which they appeal, is deficient in this power, or they set before themselves in painting some other aim than that of gratifying and educating the instinct for beauty.

But not only is there an ideal line and a mean line of beauty considered absolutely, but also an ideal line and a mean line of picturesque beauty. Not beautiful faces and figures with any expression, or in any attitude, are fit subjects for painting or sculpture — *i.e.*, look beautiful on stone or canvas — but only such faces and figures in comparative repose. The reason for this is obvious. There is something unnatural in the prolongation of a peculiar expression or an extraordinary attitude. The artistic perpetuation of such an expression or attitude is therefore disagreeable. A beautiful face is not rendered less beautiful by a smile, a beautiful body is not less beautiful when preparing for a spring. Nevertheless, the smiling face and the strained body are displeasing when represented in art. The immobility of the stone or canvas stands in too striking contrast with the mobility of the expression or attitude represented. This is the reason why the so-called "Venus" of Milo satisfies us more than the dying son of Niobe; why the struggling, desperate figures, in Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment" hit the mark less than the "Jeremiah and Ezekiel" of his earlier picture. This is the reason, again, why we find the representation of groups so seldom satisfactory. Between a number of men engaged in some common act, there is a ceaseless action and reaction of thought and feeling, and consequently of expression. If the most important moment of the action be happily caught, yet the perpetuation of it, being in fact impossible, becomes in art disagreeable. Hence the groups which satisfy us most, are all character-

ized by a certain statuesque immobility. They are groups indeed, but essentially undramatic groups. The pictures of "Mary," and "Mary Magdalene at the Foot of the Cross," or of "Mary with her Child;" the figures of Demeter, Persephone, and Iris (?) in the pediment of the Parthenon, alike partake of this character. It may be questioned whether an action as dramatic as that of the "Last Supper" has ever but once been quite successfully treated in the history of art; and in that one instance it is the repose of the central figure which is treated with the most perfect success. There is, therefore, an ideal line marking off picturesque from unpicturesque actions and situations. But mediæval and modern artists habitually represent figures and faces which transgress this ideal line. It follows either that they are unacquainted with the law of picturesque repose, or that the public for which they paint are unacquainted with it, or that the end aimed at is something different from beautiful artistic effect.

We thus arrive at the large class of pictures which violate one or both of the æsthetic canons proposed, and we ask what good can be got by looking at them? It is clear that they fail to attain the characteristic end of the art of painting; they fail to do for us that which pictures can do better than anything else — gratify and educate our love of beauty. But they may appeal to us in other ways. They may be universally interesting, because the subjects, though not beautiful, have good or intelligent faces. Every one likes goodness and likes intelligence, and the marks of them, not only when they are stamped in feature through hereditary transmission, but when they occur in passing expression, are interesting. Thus the figures of Dutch boors and housewives, though they are mean in themselves and the surroundings squalid and unlovely, often interest us from the expression of good-humour and content borne on the faces. So again, pictures representing situations which our æsthetic sense condemns as unpicturesque, may interest us as illustrating a conflict of motives with which all men can sympathize. All such paintings, though they violate the æsthetic canons, may be said to have a universal *poetical* value, inasmuch as they reveal to us the soul of beauty that may exist in things ugly, the element of human interest in actions unpicturesque.

Next we come to pictures which pos-

sess poetical interest, not for every age and class, but only for a certain age or a certain class of men. We may take as examples the numberless pictures of monks, saints, and nuns in devotional attitudes, which mediæval art delighted to multiply. These appealed to the religious emotions of those times, but awake little direct sympathy now. So again, actions not interesting to every one — such as battles and meetings of Parliament — may possess interest for a certain age or class from the influence of personal or national bias. But it would be untrue to say that such pictures have no value except to those whose emotions they directly stimulate. They may have no poetical value except to the few, but to all others they have a psychological value, and to after ages they have a historical value. They may help to show how people living in a different moral and intellectual sphere think and act, or thought and acted in past times. And thus to the man of large mind and deep sympathy they may come to have an indirect poetical value, for such a man is ready to sympathize with every human feeling that he understands.

The poetical value of all works of art tends to become more and more indirect till at last it ceases to exist altogether. There are several reasons for this. First, the figures in a picture look, just as the characters in a poem speak and act, in a way wholly intelligible only to the age in which the picture or poem was composed. No doubt the greater the artist is, the less does he appeal to the mere prejudices and fashions of his own day and the more to the larger sympathies and wider intelligence of posterity. Still, except in very few instances, there is something in his work which only his own age can understand, and each succeeding age the gulf grows wider and wider which separates him from his admirers, till at last no one who is not an antiquarian himself, or has received special help from an antiquarian, can place himself in the proper point of view for appreciating the artist's work. Three centuries have sufficed to make the intelligent appreciation of a play of Shakespeare impossible without special study. But that which fails to appeal to the poetical sense may yet appeal strongly to the historical sense. It is one thing to have a critic's eye for differences, another thing to have a poet's eye for the sameness underlying differences. The one is the gift of the many, the other of the few. Secondly, the time may come when men who are able will no longer

care to seek their amusement in the laborious study of ancient art. There are those who see in the idolatry professed by some persons for the works of past ages little more than a finely-disguised distaste for the present and distrust in the future. But what has ceased to amuse will not therefore cease to instruct. Artistic tastes come and go, but knowledge and the appetite for knowledge remain the same. All facts and works which throw light on the process of human evolution will continue to be interesting. Hence the historical value of a work of art is in some sort a value for all time and almost all minds, while its poetical value varies directly with its absolute or relative distance from the age which contemplates it.\*

That which pictures illustrating social life and manners are to the philosophical side of history, that portraits are to its biographical or personal side. A string of words and actions is all that a book can reproduce for us of a man. A portrait gives a visible framework to which we can attach these words and actions, and thus brings the book nearer to us, helping us to talk with the characters as if they were present in the flesh. Of course a portrait may be more than this. The face or figure it represents may be beautiful or otherwise interesting in itself, and so the picture may have a direct æsthetic or poetical interest apart from fidelity to its original. But *quâ* portrait it is primarily imitative, only secondarily beautiful.

Here we may remark that wherever the primary object of a picture is faithfulness rather than beauty or poetry, the photographic lens is probably destined to supersede the pencil. The intrusion of the imagination is an impertinence when it is made at the expense of truth. The advantage which the pencil once possessed of being able to catch momentary expression, has been neutralized by the invention of the heliotype; the advantage which it still possesses of being able to reproduce colour, is perhaps counterbalanced by its comparative unfaithfulness. It may be questioned, therefore, whether the art of painting any longer has a *raison d'être* except when it is directed and ought to be directed by the imagination.

On the border-line which marks the poetical from the unpoetical come comic pictures, pictures which appeal to almost

\* This branch of the subject has been admirably illustrated by M. Henri Taine, the first critic who brought the matter into due prominence.



all men, but only by a side-wind as it were, and for a certain season. Where such pictures exhibit humour of a very high order, they are classed as works of genius and imagination, and may be said to have a quasi-poetical value. Where the humour is coarse or commonplace, or approximates to the coarse or commonplace, this title is denied them. Between extremes such as M. Doré and an illustrator of *Fun*, there is an ideal line somewhere, but only the humourist can draw it.

Lower down in the scale come pictures which neither move nor amuse, but teach. Not being beautiful or picturesque, they have no æsthetic value; not exciting any human sympathy, they have no poetical value; not appealing to the anarchic love of incongruity common at times to most men, they have no comic value. But they may have a didactic and utilitarian value, and may range according to the admixture of secondary æsthetic, or poetical, or comic elements, from the satire on canvas to the illustration of a scientific text-book.

Next come pictures which do not even teach because they are not true, which illustrate emotions by unsuitable expressions.\* The large class of so-called historical paintings often fall under this category; that which is imperfectly understood being generally incorrectly represented.

Next must be classed pictures which are not only not true, but not honest, pictures in which the painter not only misunderstands, but misunderstands intentionally. It is almost impossible to avoid the conclusion that painters of the later Italian school where they attempted to represent miraculous events, were not honest. Between their pictures and those of the earlier Flemish and Italian schools there is much difference. In the latter the supernatural event is neither disguised nor explained. The figures stand or kneel on a rest of clouds with hands clasped and eyes uplifted. In the later pictures there is an attempt to get over the difficulty, and the figures are represented in the attitude of swimming or flying, attitudes which the absence of wings or water reduces to a transparent absurdity. Thus the genuine grotesque of the early painters is exchanged for the elaborate mendacity of the later. Such artistic dishonesty carries its own neme-

sis with it, as the artist mostly fails to produce in others an illusion to which he is a stranger himself.

Lastly come pictures which are purely purposeless—mere exhibitions of technical skill innocent of any further object or meaning. These may be called the "compositions," the works which are in the history of painting what many poems of the eighteenth century, and almost all prize poems, are in the history of literature. In painting these compositions the artist is dominated by no desire to move or to instruct mankind, but simply groups together a number of striking or pleasing figures in striking or pleasing attitudes, and then calls his picture the "Triumph of Love," or "Hell," or "Heaven," or anything else, so long as the title be striking or pleasing. The display of great technical skill makes such compositions to the eye of the true artist or poet only more offensive. The meanness of a really mean thing is only heightened by elaboration. Perhaps it may here be objected that no human action is really purposeless, and that the artist must have some object in painting as the scribbler in scribbling or the bad musician in playing. This is in a sense true, and it would be more correct to define "compositions" as works in which it is the object of the artist to show off his skill, as it is the apparent object of the figures in his pictures to show off their round limbs and graceful attitudes, and as it is the object of the amateur public to which he appeals to show off their power of discriminating his skill and his figures' grace. The futility of these objects is obvious. An attitude is not graceful which is purposeless. An attitude is an arrangement of limbs giving expression to a particular feeling—*e.g.*, the desire of movement or the desire of rest. An attitude of rest assumed by a person who does not desire rest is the reverse of graceful. Hence the artist who represents an affected attitude or expression, violates not only the laws of good sense but the law of beauty as properly understood. His work is, therefore, æsthetically valueless. Still more valueless is it from a psychological or historical point of view, except in so far as it illustrates the love of affectation peculiar at certain times to certain strata of society.

A few words may be said to show the bearing of the aforesaid remarks upon landscape painting. First, a tract of country may be so dull, as a man may be

\* This arises from a defect on the part of the artist—carelessness in observing, want of technical skill, or lack of psychological insight.

so ugly, as to defy successful reproduction in serious art. Again, there are phenomena in nature so sudden and momentary that they look absurd when transferred to canvas. The propriety of introducing a flash of lightning into a picture may be questioned. Again, a landscape, though it be not strictly beautiful, may appeal to our feelings of wonder and awe, and so have a poetical as distinguished from a purely æsthetic interest. The picture of a storm-beaten cliff may move us fully as much as that of a sunny Italian bay. Of course no psychological or historical interest can attach to a landscape as such. Where an attempt is made to excite interest of this sort, we resent it as an impertinence, or condone it as a venial affectation, according as the picture is in other respects worthy or unworthy of praise. We resent the continual introduction of nymphs and Greek temples in the pictures of Poussin and Claude, we condone the unmeaning figures and fanciful titles attached to some of Turner's landscapes. The "pathetic fallacy" suggested in the famous picture of the "Téméraire" trembles on the line which divides the poetical from the sentimental.

The sum of this essay may be expressed in a few words. When we see a picture we may ask ourselves questions such as these: Is it beautiful? then let us sit down and enjoy its beauty. Is it interesting as revealing elements of beauty, such as good or intelligent expressions, in faces not beautiful? then let us sit down and learn to sympathize with that which at first sight does not please. Is it instructive, as illustrating one of the stages of man's development? Then let us contrast it with analogous scenes in our own everyday life, and note the progress which has taken place between the two periods. Is it comic or satiric? Then let us enjoy the joke or take to heart the lesson that the artist meant to convey. Every picture ought to offer us one of these things, and every man with a clear eye and a mind untrammelled by pedantry can see whether it has one of them to offer. But to be any one of these things the picture must first of all be truthful in fact and intention. Let us first ask, then, whether it be free of lies and affectation, and for the rest judge no work of art, so it be not marked by these plague-spots, to be common or unclean.

From Chambers' Journal.

#### PROPHETIC DAYS.

WOULD-BE weatherwise folks would be saved a world of trouble if experience justified the popular faith in certain days of the year — saints' days, of course, most of them — having such a prophetic power attached to them, that by merely using our eyes and our almanacs, we may learn what the future will bring "of good or evil luck, of plagues, of dearths, or season's quality." These ominous days are but few in number, something under a score; and it is impossible to guess why they, any more than their fellows, should be invested with such a valuable attribute.

If the New-year's first morning sky is covered by clouds of a dusky red hue, there will be much debate and strife among the great ones of the earth, and — this we may readily believe — many robberies will be perpetrated before the year has run its course. Should the sun deign to shine upon St. Vincent's Day, dwellers in wine-growing lands may take heart and rejoice, for they will see more wine than water — that is to say, they may calculate upon a dry season, especially conducive to a profitable vintage. Less limited in its application is the foreknowledge acquirable by meteorological students upon the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, according to the old monkish rhymes, one of the many translations of which runs:

If St. Paul's Day be fair and clear,  
It does betide a happy year;  
But if it chance to snow or rain,  
Then will be dear all kinds of grain;  
If clouds or mist do dark the sky,  
Great store of birds and beasts shall die;  
And if the winds do fly aloft,  
Then war shall vex the kingdom oft.

Candlemas prognostications go, as those of dreams are said to do, by contraries; fine weather on Candlemas Day being prophetic of a long succession of unseasonably cold days, and necessarily a failure of the crops: while foul weather on that day is a sure promise of a bright spring, with a summer to match:

If Candlemas Day be dry and fair,  
The half o' winter's to come, and mar;  
If Candlemas Day be wet and foul,  
The half o' winter's gone at Yule.

Or as a southern version puts it:

If Candlemas Day be fair and bright,  
Winter will have another flight;  
But if it be dark with clouds and rain,  
Winter is gone, and will not come again.

This idea is common throughout Europe. In Germany, they aver that the badger peeps out of his hole upon Candlemas morning, and if the ground be white with snow, takes his walks abroad; but should the sunshine greet his eyes, he will not venture from his snug abiding-place; being of one mind with the shepherd, who would rather see a wolf enter his fold, than the sun, upon Candlemas Day. So in Norfolk the proverb goes that a shepherd would prefer seeing his wife on the bier, than the sun shining clear upon Candlemas Day; and they firmly believe in the wisdom of the rhymes:

On Candlemas Day, if the thorns hang a drop,  
Then you are sure of a good pea-crop.

As far as the sun shines in on Candlemas Day,  
So far will the snow blow in afore Old May.

In 1855, a correspondent of *Notes and Queries* announced that the Candlemas prognostication had been verified in Norfolk, if nowhere else, when a spell of rough winter weather was brought to an end by a fair and sunny Candlemas Day. "On the following evening, about ten o'clock, a thaw suddenly commenced; but on the evening of the fifth, frost again set in with increased intensity, which continued uninterruptedly to February the twenty-fourth, the ice in the 'broads' ranging from eight inches to a foot in thickness." But he had forgotten to take the change of style into account; so the striking verification of the ancient superstition was no verification at all. The Hebrideans observe, or did observe, an odd custom. On Candlemas Day, in every house, a sheaf of oats was dressed in feminine attire, and laid, with a big club by its side, in a basket, called "Brüd's bed." Before turning in for the night, the mistress and her maids cried in chorus: "Brüd is come! Brüd is welcome!" If, next morning, an impression of the club was visible in the ashes on the hearth, it was held a sure presage of an abundant harvest, and a prosperous year; if the club had not left its mark, it was an omen of coming bad times.

Down Winchester way it is commonly believed that from whichever quarter the wind blows chiefly upon Palm-Sunday, it will blow during the best part of the summer. In Hertfordshire they hold that

A good deal of rain upon Easter Day  
Gives a good crop of grass, but little good hay.

If the sun shines clearly on Easter Day, good weather and good times are in store, and one may make sure of seeing the sun upon Whitsunday. The lightest of showers falling upon Ascension Day is an omen dire, foretelling sickness among cattle, and great scarcity of food for man. A reverse result follows a dry Holy-Thurs-day, and pleasant weather may be expected almost up to Christmastide. A fine Whitsunday means a plentiful harvest, but if any rain falls then, thunder and lightning, bringing blight and mildew with it, may be expected. Almost as ill-omened is a wet Midsummer Day, for although apples, pears, and plums will not be affected thereby, nut-bushes will prove barren, and the corn-fields be smitten with disease.

It was a proverb in Scotland that if the deer rose dry and lay down dry on Bullion's Day, there would be an early harvest. Considering the soldier-saint was the chosen patron of publicans and dispensers of good liquor, it seems odd that a shower falling upon St. Martin's Day should be supposed to indicate a twenty days' opening of heaven's sluices. Martin, however, when he went in for wet, was more moderate than his uncanonized brother Swithun, commonly called St. Swithin; he, as every one knows, is content with nothing under forty days:

Saint Swithin's Day, gin ye do rain,  
For forty days it will remain;  
Saint Swithin's Day, an' ye be fair,  
For forty days 'twill rain nae mair.

Why this should be, has been explained in this wise: When the good Saxon Bishop of Winchester departed this life some thousand years ago, he was, in accordance with his expressed wish, buried in the churchyard, so that his humble grave might be trodden by the feet of passers-by, and receive the eaves-droppings from the abbey roof. Thus he was permitted to rest undisturbed for a hundred years; then the clergy of the diocese took it into their heads to have the saint taken up, and deposited inside the cathedral; but when they set about the work, the rain came down with such violence that they were compelled to desist, and finding the deluge continued for forty days, interpreted it to be a warning against removing Swithin's remains, and therefore contented themselves with erecting a chapel over his grave. As poor Robin sings:

Whether this were so or no,  
Is more than you or I do know.

Better it is to rise betime,  
And to make hay while sun doth shine  
Than to believe in tales and lies  
Which idle monks and friars devise.

Mr. Earle, however, has shewn that while it is true that St. Swithin did leave directions that he should be buried in a vile place, under the eaves-droppings, on the north side of Winchester church, there was no supernatural protest on his part against his relics being removed to the magnificent shrine prepared for them in Ethelwold's cathedral. On the contrary, the weather was most propitious for the ceremony. Whoever was at the pains of inventing the story of the forty days' tempest, misapplied his imaginative faculties altogether, since the phenomenon popularly associated with St. Swithin is as apocryphal as the story concocted to account for it. From observations made at Greenwich in the twenty years ending with 1861, it appears that during that term forty days' rain was never known to follow St. Swithin's Day; while, oddly enough, the wettest weather came when the saint failed to "christen the apples." In only six instances—in 1841, 1845, 1851, 1853, 1854, and 1856—did it rain at all upon the fateful day; and the forty days following shewed respectively twenty-three, twenty-six, thirteen, eighteen, sixteen, and fourteen rainy ones. On the other hand, there were twelve wet days out of the forty after the dry St. Swithin of 1842, twenty-two after that of 1843, twenty-nine after that of 1860, and no less than thirty-one after that of 1848. Not that any evidence is likely to shake the faith of believers in the ancient notion. Convinced against their will, they will hold their old opinion still, like Hone's lady-friend, who, finding her favourite saint's day fine, prophesied a long term of beautiful weather; but when a few drops of rain fell towards evening, veered round, and was positive six weeks of wet impended. Her first prophecy turned out to be the correct one; but the obstinate dame would not have it so, declaring stoutly that if no rain had fallen in the day-time, there certainly must have been some at night. There are rainy saints beside Swithin; in Belgium they pin their faith to St. Godeliève; in France, to Saints Gervais and Protais, and St. Médard.

If Bartholomew's Day be ushered in by a hoar-frost, followed by mist, a sharp, biting winter will come in due time. A fine Michaelmas Day betokens a sun-

shiny winter, the pleasantness of which will be neutralized by nipping, long-staying north-easters. Merry Christmas sadly belies its name in its prognostications, which are of such a very lugubrious order, that, did we trust in them, we should be inclined to parody Carey's famous song, and pray:

Of all the days that are in the week,  
Come Christmas but on one day,  
And that is the day that comes between  
The Saturday and the Monday!

A Sunday Christmas Day is the only one prophetic of unalloyed good, being the harbinger of a new year in which beasts will thrive, fields flourish, and all lands rest in peace. When Christmas Day falls upon a Wednesday, we may hope for a genial summer, as recompense for a stormy winter; but when it falls upon any of the remaining five, a severe winter without any compensation is in store for us; supplemented by war and cattle-plague, when the festival comes upon a Monday; with mortality among kings and great people, when it comes upon a Tuesday; and by a great clearing-off of old folks, when it falls upon a Saturday. If Childermas Day be wet, it threatens us with dearth; if it be fine, it promises us abundance; and as the wind blows on the last night of December, it tells what the unborn year will bring—for

If New-year's eve night-wind blow south,  
It betokeneth warmth and growth;  
If west, much milk, and fish in the sea;  
If north much cold and storms there will be;  
If east, the trees will bear much fruit;  
If north-east, flee it, man and brute.

Not the least amusing thing about all these sage predictions, as regards weather, is that they take no account of the change from old to new style, which altered the exact position of the days named; there being now, for example, a difference of twelve days between old St. Swithin's and new St. Swithin's Day. Weather prophets are above minding this awkward trifle.

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From The Spectator.

THE USELESSNESS OF ABSTRACT  
PREACHING.

THERE are few questions better worth discussing than that which the Bishop of Oxford started at the Church Congress, and on which Sir Stafford Northcote touched in his address to the Torring-

ton farmers, — to wit, the relation in the instruction and guidance of mankind of the abstract to the concrete, the general to the particular, the law or principle to the specific instance. The method of dealing with the dispute between the agricultural labourers and their employers, which the Bishop of Oxford commended, and of which Sir Stafford Northcote highly approves, is one which may be applied in countless ways. "Preach a pure and lofty morality to both parties, and pronounce no decision upon the particular case," — this is in effect the advice of the Bishop and the Baronet. The "functions" of the clergy, thinks Sir Stafford, are "spiritual," — it is their duty "to raise the general character of their parishioners," "to endeavour to bring among them feelings of Christian kindness," to expatiate in a lofty and cloudless region where no speck of mundane dust can sully the white of their professional garments, and to keep themselves apart from the controversies of the street, the field, the market. One thing must be conceded to Sir Stafford Northcote, that there is comfort in the method he praises. It is easy; and it is pretty sure of being applauded. Most people have recourse to it, more or less, in their vocation. In politics it is, for its own purposes, invaluable and almost infallible, and it may be doubted whether Constitutional government could get on without it. How could Prime Ministers compose speeches from the Throne, or under-secretaries answer Parliamentary questions, or orators produce their most thrilling effects, if they were not permitted to launch into general principles? The very thunder which shakes the arsenal is a general maxim wrapped up in a sonorous phrase. If we were asked by a young orator — for an old orator would not require any information on the subject — how he could without fail move an audience, we should tell him to think of some political or social maxim which no human being in a state of mental and moral sanity could question, and to utter it in loud tones, with flashing eyes, fierce gesticulation, and the whole air of one who was incurring imminent risk of martyrdom. In society, the fluent and vivacious retailer of current maxims, who shuns particular cases, and is deft enough to avoid treading on the toes of the company, is the successful man. Writers for the Press enjoy less than most persons of the emotional glow of easy and applauded vagueness, but even they occasionally di-

vest themselves of that "exactness" which, according to Bacon, is made by writing, and don the loose-flowing dishabille of platitude. All readers of the *Times* — the Editor, we fancy, best of all — can tell the article which is written for the sake of sound from that which has a definite purpose and is based upon real knowledge. An amusing example in the former kind was given the other day. The article was on farming, and *à propos* of the grazing of milch cows agriculturalists were admonished that "all these things are in the hands of a Power which we cannot control, and had best not rashly impugn." The tenant-farmers of Bucks and Somerset were illuminated with the remark that "man has to assist Nature, and supplement the great work of Creation." After this, can we doubt that the price of beef will fall, and that Mr. Disraeli may once more indulge freely in the mutton of black-faced sheep?

The grand drawback to the general method is that, though men are pleased with it, nature disowns it, and that men even, when asked to pay for it, not in plaudits, but in cash, are apt to find it out. The social favourite, who is thought by everyone to be a paragon of wisdom because his observations are wide enough to cover, or seem to cover, contradictory opinions, will meet sometimes with a rebuff. "Then you are of my opinion," says Croaker to Honeywood in Goldsmith's play. "Entirely," is the reply. "And you reject mine?" cries Mrs. Croaker. "Heaven forbid, madame! No, sure, no reasoning could be more just than yours." This appeases the lady. "O, then," she says, "you think I'm quite right?" "Perfectly right," smiles Honeywood. "But unhappily the husband has not taken himself away. 'A plague of plagues!' exclaims Croaker, "we can't be both right. I ought to be sorry, or I ought to be glad. My hat must be on my head, or my hat must be off." In politics general maxims are good for the hustings, or even in the House of Commons; but they will not do for Crimean wars or Indian mutinies. Their worth in the world of action has been pithily pronounced upon by Macaulay, and no practical man will dispute the soundness of his estimate: — "Every one who has seen the world knows that nothing is so useless as a general maxim. If it be very moral and very true, it may serve for a copy to a charity boy. If, like those of Rochefoucauld, it be sparkling and



whimsical, it may make an excellent motto for an essay. But few indeed of the many wise apophthegms which have been uttered, from the time of the Seven Sages of Greece to that of Poor Richard, have prevented a single foolish action."

We may be permitted, then, to doubt whether the general and abstract method of spiritual instruction is that by which the Clergy of England will practically benefit their parishioners. Our own experience, extending over a period of nearly ten years in a country parish, would lead us to conclude that preaching of this kind has absolutely no more effect upon the character or lives of the parishioners than the moaning of the wind has upon the bones that lie in the churchyard. During that period we have gradually become acquainted with the characteristic temptations, failings, tricks, vices, and crimes of the neighbourhood. The chief social ill, of course, is that the men drink their wages, instead of taking them home to their wives. Market gardening is the prevailing occupation. The people are tempted to trickery in weighing their goods and in preparing them for market, and many tricks they practise. It is not safe to buy a sack of potatoes without weighing it, or a basket of apples without looking whether those on the top are not immensely better in quality than those below, or a truss of hay without ascertaining whether a brick has been inserted to increase the weight. The rule with

the farmers, when any of their live stock is ailing and cannot be perfectly cured, is to "get rid of it," without mention of the ailment. There is a constant temptation to overload horses, and to use them with cruel carelessness. We said that we have been nearly ten years in the parish. We have heard preaching in the parish church all the time; and we are prepared to state that, if a few allusions to drunkenness are allowed for, we have never known the preacher lay a "fiery finger" upon, or so much as mention, any one of the peculiar vices and temptations of the place, — systematic selfishness, utter and unabashed, is the practical moral code, and never have we known the clergyman come down from the clouds to the extent even of saying, "If you 'best' your neighbours, and watch day and night for the advantage in bargains, you are violating the law of Christ." The consequence in our case has been that we scorn and detest the hypocritical sham of mouthing moral platitudes which have no effect whatever. Our distinct impression is that it has never occurred to the great body of parishioners that the sermons preached in the parish church have, or are meant to have, any connection whatever with their daily life. And we are perfectly sure that no good will be done by inculcating, as the sum of morality, the imitation of Christ, until preachers also say how Christ would act if He had vegetables to sell or horses to drive.

THE *Journal Officiel* informs us that the Municipal Council of Paris has recently voted a sum for the purchase of works of art for the embellishment of the city. The Préfet of the Seine has divided the commissions for these works among divers painters, sculptors, engravers, medallists, and painters on glass. The commissions for paintings alone amount to as many as sixteen, the most important perhaps being that given to M. Signol, member of the Institute, who is charged with the decoration of the right arm of the great cross of the church of Saint-Sulpice, the left arm having been painted by him some time ago.

The decoration of the grand church of La Trinité is to be continued, and the painting of two of the chapels has been entrusted to MM. Barrias and Lecomte-Dunouy. Other well-known artists are likewise to be employed on this great work, the expense of which is to be shared by the State with the City. Several works of sculpture have also been ordered for

the churches of Paris; we may mention especially a statue of the Virgin to be executed in marble for the new church of Notre-Dame-des-Champs, for which M. Le Père has received the commission. Besides commissioning new works the Municipal Administration charges itself with the restoration of the mural paintings, mutilated statues and other works of art, principally in the churches of Paris, which were injured during the siege and reign of the Commune. All such restorations are confided to trustworthy artists, in one case (that of M. Dumont, whose statue of the Virgin in Notre-Dame de Lorette was broken during the insurrection) the artist himself being charged with the restoration of his own work. It would perhaps be as well if our City Corporation would bear in mind this munificence of the impoverished city of Paris. Who ever heard of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen voting a sum for the purchase of works of art!